HEAVEN
Taken by
STORM:
OR,
The HOLY VIOLENCE a Christian is to put forth in the pursuit after Glory.

By THOMAS WATSON, Minister of the Gospel.

Phil. 3. 4. *I press toward the mark.*

Σὺ δὲ μὴ τῷ σώματι πρόσεχε, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀμοιβὴν ἐννόει. Chrysost. de pœn. Hom. 59.

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1752.

TO THE
Right Honourable,

Sir WILLIAM TURNER, Knight,

LORD MAYOR
OF THE
CITY of LONDON.

Right Honourable,

IT is the happineſs of this City, to have a Magiſtrate that *bears not the Sword in vain.* Your place

is high; God hath lent you his *own Title* *: your work is great, it lies in the distribution of Justice, which (according to *Aristotle*) comprehends all virtues in it. And in this your high orb you have acted vigorously. Your good Government hath helped to raise, if not *London*'s structures, yet its fame. My Lord, to be a κοινὸν ἀγαθὸν, *a publick Good*, will both render your life honourable, and your death comfortable *. God did reserve you for such a juncture of time as this.

* Psal. 82. 6.

* *Gratius est prodesse aliis quàm magnas opes habere.* Cicero.

this. When is there more need of zeal in ſuperiours, than when vice grows heady in inferiours. The ſubject I here humbly dedicate to your Lordſhip, is, *Violence for Heaven.* A Divine κρᾶσις, or temperature of ſoul to be much aſpired after; for by this you may help to ſave not only your ſelf, but others. Put on Integrity as a Robe; and let zealous violence more adorn you than the richeſt Chain of gold. But I have cauſe to break forth into Panegyricks. Indeed your *own*

works praiſe you in the gates. Your prudence and courage; your impartiality in deciding Cauſes; your puniſhing of Oaths, and correcting the falſe ballance; your compliance with his Majeſties Royal Proclamation againſt Healthdrinking, have erected for you a living monument in the breaſts of all ſober and pious men. Among other things, your Self-denial hath been eminent in letting go ſome of your Perquiſites for the good of others.

Poſſe

—Poſſe & nolle nobile eſt— Seneca.

The former Governours that had been before me (ſaith *Nehemiah*) *were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them Bread and Wine, &c. but ſo did not I.* What pity is it that *London* ſhould, like *Sparta*, keep ſuch a Governour but one year. My Lord, I hate to 'give *flattering titles* *; but I have taken this boldneſs to ſay this little, both for your Lordſhip's encouragement, and the imitation

* Job 32. 22.

of thoſe that ſhall ſucceed in your Chair. My Lord, this ſmall Tractate comes under your Honours Patronage, and I entreat your favourable peruſal and acceptance of it; it was intended you ſooner, but ſome emergent occaſions intervening prevented. If this little ſpark ſhall give light or heat to any heart, I have my deſire. The great God who hath placed you at the helm of this City, fill you with his heavenly benediction, and ſo animate you with *all might by his Spirit in the inner*

inner man, that you may be an *Eben-ezer*, a ſtone of help to us; that you may do worthily in *London*, and be famous in your Generation; ſo prayeth he who is,

Sir,

Your Servant in the Goſpel,

July 9. 1669.

THO. WATSON.

AN

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE.

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ERRATA.

PAge 40. margent, for *cælo*, r. *cælos*. p. 44. marg. for *ſurgere*, read *ſugere*. p. 191. marg. for *faſtiſcere*, r. *fatiſcere*. p. 194. line 2. for reproves his *firſt love*, r. *recovers his firſt love*.

Heaven taken by Storm.

Matthew 11. 12.

The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

John Baptiſt hearing in priſon the fame of Chriſt, ſends two of his Diſciples to him with this queſtion, *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?* verſ. 3. Not (as *Tertullian* thinks) that *John Baptiſt* knew not that Jeſus Chriſt was the True Meſſiah; for he was confirmed in this both by the Spirit of God, and by a ſign from Heaven, *Joh.* 1. 33. But *John Baptiſt* hereby endeavoured to correct the ignorance of his own Diſciples, who had a greater reſpect for him than for Chriſt.

In the fourth verſe Chriſt anſwers their queſtion, *Go and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee; the blind receive their ſight, the lame walk, the Lepers are cleanſed, &c.* Jeſus Chriſt demonſtrates himſelf to be the true *Meſſiah*, by his miracles which were real and ocular proofs of his Divinity. *Johns* Diſciples being departed, Chriſt falls into an high elogium and commendation of *John Baptiſt*, Verſ. 7. *What went ye out into the Wilderneſs to ſee, a reed ſhaken with the wind?* As if Chriſt had ſaid, *John Baptiſt* was no unconſtant man, fluctuating in his mind, and being ſhaken as a *Reed* from one opinion to another; * he was no *Reuben, unſtable as water*, but was fixed and reſolute in Religion, and a Priſon could make no alteration in him.

* *Per arundinem cum ſit nutanti cacumine, & quovis vel leviſſimo vento nunc huc, nunc illuc agitatur, intelligit Salvator hominem levem & inſtabilem, at talis Arundo non erat* Johannes, *ſed conſtans, & ſemper ſui ſimilis, nec in carcere quidquam ſuæ ſanctitiæ mutavit.* Brugenſis.

Verſ. 8. *But what went ye out for to ſee, a man cloathed in ſoft raiment? John* did not indulge his ſenſes; he wore not ſilks,

In eremo vixit Johannes ubi nullæ ſuppetunt veſtium aut ciborum delitiæ, ſed inculta omnia, auſtera & ſqualida; non fuit homo mollis; id locus, id cibus, id veſtitus illius loquebantur. Idem.

but

but *Camels hair*; nor did he affect to live at Court, but in a wilderneſs, *Mat.* 3. 3, 4.

Again, Chriſt commends *John* as being his forerunner, who *prepared the way before him*; *verſ.* 10. He was the morning Star which did precede the Sun of Righteouſneſs; and that Chriſt might ſufficiently honour this holy man, he doth not only parallel him with, but prefer him before, the chief of the Prophets. *Verſ.* 9. *What went ye out for to ſee, a Prophet? yea I ſay unto you, and more than a Prophet.* Verſ. 11. *Among them that are born of women, there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt:* He was eminent both for dignity of office, and perſpicuity of Doctrine; and ſo the Text is uſhered in: *From the daies of John the Baptiſt, until now, the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* In which words there is,

1. The preface or introduction; *from the daies of John the Baptiſt until now.* 1.

John Baptiſt was a zealous Preacher, a *Boanerges*, or Son of Thunder, and after his Preaching people began to be awakened out of their ſins.

Hence learn, what kind of miniſtry is

like to do moſt good, namely, that which works upon the conſciences of men. *John Baptiſt did lift up his voice like a Trumpet*, he preached the Doctrine of Repentance with power, *Mat.* 3. 2. *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand:* He came hewing and cuting down mens ſins, and afterwards preached Chriſt to them. Firſt, He poured in the Vinegar of the Law, then the Wine of the Goſpel. This was that Preaching made men ſtudiouſly ſeek after Heaven: *John* did not ſo much preach to pleaſe, as to profit; he choſe rather to diſcover mens ſins, than to ſhew his own eloquence. That is the beſt looking-glaſs, not which is moſt gilded, but which ſhews the trueſt face. That Preaching is to be preferred, which makes the trueſt diſcovery of mens ſins, and ſhews them their hearts. *John Baptiſt was a burning and ſhining light*; he did burn in his Doctrine, and ſhine in his Life; and from that time men preſſed into Heaven. * *Peter* (who was filled with a ſpirit of zeal) having humbled his hearers for their ſins, and opened to them a fountain in Chriſts blood, they were then *pricked at their heart*,

* *Johanne Chriſtum & pœnitentiam prædicante, populus magno impetu accurrit ad oblatam gratiam.* Munſterus.

heart, *Act.* 2. 37. * 'Tis the greateſt mercy to have a ſoul-ſearching Miniſtry. If one had a deſperate wound, he would deſire to have it ſearched to the bottom: who would not be content to have their ſouls ſearched, ſo they may have them ſaved? * κατενύγησαν.

2. The matter in the Text, *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* 2.

What is meant by the Kingdom of Heaven? Queſt.

Some interpret it of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which reveals Chriſt and Heaven. So *Eraſmus*. Reſp. *Nova Evangelii doctrina ad quam jam ultrò confluebat Turba.* Eraſm.

But, I rather by the Kingdom of Heaven underſtand Glory: and ſo learned *Beza* and others.

This Kingdom *ſuffereth violence* *. * βιάζεται.

'Tis a metaphor from a Town or Caſtle that holds out in war, and is not taken but by ſtorm *. So the Kingdom of Heaven will not be taken without violence; * *The violent take it by force.* * *Metaphora ſumpta à caſtris, vel ab arce quapiam quæ irrumpentibus hoſtibus diripitur.* Brugenſ. * *Impetu quodam in illud perrumpitur.* Junius.

The earth is inherited by the *meek*, *Mat.* 5. 5. Heaven is inherited by the *violent*.

lent. Our life is military, Chriſt is our Captain, the Goſpel is the banner, the graces are our ſpiritual artillery, and Heaven is only taken in a forcible way. The words fall into two parts.

1. The Combate, *ſuffereth violence.*

2. The Conqueſt, *the violent take it by force.*

Obſerv. *The right way to take Heaven is by ſtorm:* Or thus, *None get into Heaven but violent ones.* This violence hath a double aſpect.

1. It concerns men as *Magiſtrates*; they muſt be violent.

1. *In puniſhing the nocent.* When *Aaron's Urim* and *Thummim* will do no good, then muſt *Moſes* come with his *Rod.* The wicked are the bad humours and ſurfeit of the Common-wealth, which by the care of Magiſtracy are to be purged out. God hath placed Governours *for the terrour of evil doers,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 14. They muſt not be like the Sword-fiſh, which hath a ſword in his head, but is without an heart. They muſt not have a ſword in their hand, but no heart to draw it out for the cutting

cutting down of impiety. Connivance in a Magiſtrate ſupports vice, and by not puniſhing offenders he adopts other mens faults, and makes them his own *. Magiſtracy without zeal is like the body without ſpirits. Too much lenity emboldens ſin, and doth but ſhave the head which deſerves to be cut off.

* *Qui non prohibet cum poteſt, jubet.*

2. *In defending the innocent.* The Magiſtrate is the *Aſylum* or Altar of Refuge for the oppreſſed to fly to. *Charls* Duke of *Calabria* was ſo in love with doing juſtice, that he cauſed a Bell to be hung at his Palace gate, which whoſoever did ring, was ſure preſently to be admitted into the Dukes preſence, or have ſome Officers ſent out to hear his cauſe. *Ariſtides* was famous for his Juſtice, of whom the Hiſtorian ſaith, he would never favour any mans cauſe becauſe he was his friend, nor do injuſtice to any becauſe he was his enemy. The Magiſtrates ballance is the oppreſſed mans ſhield.

This violence concerns men as *Chriſtians*. Though Heaven be given us freely, yet we muſt contend for it *, *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. 2.

* *Solerter & ſtrenuè agendum eſt, nec in tanto rerum cardine ceſſandum, cum hæc una res naturâ hominis digna in qua vires impendat omnes ſuas.* Clarius.

What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. Our work is great, our time ſhort, our Maſter urgent, we had need therefore ſummon together all the powers of our ſouls, and ſtrive as in a matter of life and death, that we may arrive at the Kingdom above: We muſt not only put forth *diligence*, but *violence*. For the illuſtrating and clearing the Propoſition, I ſhall ſhew,

1. What violence is not meant here:

1. This violence in the text excludes 1. An *ignorant* violence; to be violent for that which we do not underſtand, *Acts* 17. 23. *As I paſſed by and beheld your devotions, I found an Altar with this inſcription, ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ, To the unknown God.* Theſe *Athenians* were violent in their devotion; but it might be ſaid to them, as Chriſt ſaid to the woman of *Samaria*, *Joh.* 4. 22. *Ye worſhip ye know not what.* Thus the Papiſts are violent in their Religion, witneſs their pennance, faſting, dilacerating themſelves till the blood comes, but it is *a zeal without knowledge*: their metal is better than their eye-ſight. When *Aaron* was to burn the incenſe upon the Altar, he was firſt *to light the lamps*, *Exod.* 30. 7. When

zeal

zeal like incenſe burns, firſt the lamp of knowledge muſt be lighted.

2. It excludes a bloody violence, which is twofold: Firſt, when one goes to lay violent hands upon himſelf. The body is an earthly priſon where God hath put the ſoul; we muſt not break priſon, but ſtay till God by death lets us out. The Sentinel is not to ſtir without leave from his Captain: nor muſt we dare to ſtir hence, without Gods leave. Our bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. when we offer violence to them, we deſtroy Gods Temple: The lamp of life muſt burn ſo long as any natural moiſture is left like oil to feed it.

Secondly, When one takes away the life of another. There's too much of this violence now adaies. No ſin hath a louder voice than blood, *Gen.* 4. 10. *The voice of thy Brothers blood cryeth unto me from the ground.* If there is a curſe for him that *ſmites his neighbour ſecretly*, *Deut.* 27. 24. then he is double curſed that kills him. If a man had ſlain another unawares, he might take Sanctuary, and fly to the Altar: but if he had done it willingly, the holineſs of the place was

Clamitat in Cœlum vox ſanguinis, &c.

was not to protect him, *Exod.* 21. 14. *If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine Altar that he may die.* *Joab* being a man of blood, King *Solomon* sought to slay him, though he caught hold on the horns of the Altar, 1 *King.* 8. 29. In *Bohemia* formerly, the murderer was to be beheaded, and put in the same Coffin with him whom he killed. Thus we see what violence the text excludes.

2. 2. What violence is meant here; it is an *Holy Violence.* This is twofold. 1. We must be violent for the *Truth.* Here *Pilate*'s question will be moved, *What is Truth?* Truth is either the blessed word of God, which is called ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας, *the Word of Truth.* Or those doctrinals which are deduced from the Word, and agree with it as the Dial with the Sun, or the transcript with the Original; as, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of the Creation, the doctrine of Free-grace, Justification by the blood of Christ, Regeneration, Resurrection of the dead, and the life of glory: these truths we must be violent for, which is either by being *Advocates* for them, or *Martyrs**. Truth

* *Potiùs ruat Cœlum quàm pereat una mica veritatis.* Luther.

Truth is the moſt glorious thing; * the leaſt filing of this gold is precious; what ſhall we be violent for, if not for Truth? Truth is *ancient*; it's gray hairs may make it venerable; it comes from him who is *the ancient of daies*. * Truth is *unerring*, it is the *Star* which leads to Chriſt. Truth is pure, *Pſal.* 119. 140. it is compared to *ſilver refined* ſeven times, *Pſal.* 12.6. There is not the leaſt ſpot on Truth's face, it breaths nothing but ſanctity. Truth is *triumphant*; it is like a great Conquerour, when all its enemies lye dead, it keeps the field, and ſets up its trophies of victory *. Truth may be oppoſed, but never quite depoſed. In the time of *Diocleſian*, things ſeemed deſperate, truth ran low, ſoon after was the golden time of *Conſtantius*, and then truth did again lift up its head. When the Water in the *Thames* is loweſt, an high tide is ready to come in. God is on truth's ſide, and ſo long there is no fear but it will prevail: *The Heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved*, 2 Pet. 3. 12. but not that truth which came from Heaven, 1 *Pet.* 1. 25.

* *Pulchrior eſt Veritas Chriſtianorum quàm Helene Græcorum.* Aug. Ep. ad Hier.

* *Id verum quod primum.* Tertull.

* μεγάλη τῆς ἀληθείας ἰσχύς. Chryſ.

Truth

Truth hath noble effects. Truth is the *ſeed of the new birth.* God doth not regenerate us by miracles, or Revelations, but by the word of truth, *Jam.* 1. 18. As truth is the breeder of grace, ſo the feeder of it, 1 *Tim.* 4. 6. * Truth *ſanctifies*, *John* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them by thy truth.* Truth is the ſeal that leaves the print of its own Holineſs upon us; it is both *ſpeculum* and *lavacrum*, a glaſs to ſhew us our blemiſhes, and a lavor to waſh them away, Truth *makes us free*, *John.* 8. 32. it beats off the fetters of ſin, and puts us into a ſtate of *Sonſhip*, *Rom.* 8. 11. and Kingſhip, *Rev.* 1. 6. Truth is *comforting*; this Wine cheers. When *Davids* Harp and Viol could yield him no comfort, Truth did, *Pſal.* 119. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickned me.* Truth is an *antidote againſt errour.* Errour is the adultery of the mind; it ſtains the ſoul, as Treaſon doth the blood. Errour damns as well as vice. A man may as well die by Poiſon, as Piſtol; and what can ſtave off Errour but Truth? The reaſon ſo many have been trapanned into errour, is, becauſe they either did not know, or not love the

* ἁγιάζω.

the Truth. I can never ſay enough in the honour of truth. Truth is *baſis fidei*, the ground of our faith; it gives us an exact model of Religion; it ſhews us what we are to believe: * Take away truth, and our faith is fanſie. Truth is the *beſt flower in the Church's Crown*: We have not a richer Jewel to truſt God with than our ſouls, nor he a richer Jewel to truſt us with than his truths. Truth is *Inſigne honoris*, *an Enſign of honour*; it diſtinguiſheth us from the falſe Church, as chaſtity diſtinguiſheth a virtuous woman from an Harlot. In ſhort, truth is *Eccleſiæ præſidium*, the bulwark of a Nation: 2 *Chron.* 11.17. it is ſaid, the *Levites* (who were the *anteſignani*, the enſign-bearers of truth) *ſtrengthened the Kingdom*. Truth may be compared to the Capitol of *Rome*, which was a place of the greateſt ſtrength; or *the Tower of David*, on which *there hang a thouſand ſhields*, *Cant.* 4. 4. Our Forts and Navies do not ſo much ſtrengthen us as truth. Truth is the beſt *Militia* of a Kingdom; if once we part with truth, and eſpouſe Popery, *the lock is cut where our ſtrength lies*. What then ſhould we be violent for,

* *Veritas irradiat intellectum, animat fidem.* Bern.

for, if not for truth? We are bid ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι, to contend as in an Agony *for the faith delivered to the Saints*, *Jude* v. 3. If truth once be gone, we may write this Epitaph on *Englands* tombstone, *The Glory is departed.*

2. 2. This holy violence is when we are violent for our own salvation, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* The Greek word σπουδὴν, signifies *anxious carefulness*, * or a serious beating ones thoughts about the business of eternity; such a care as sets head and heart a work: in this channel of Religion all a Christians zeal should run.

* Jansen. Beza. Gerhard.

3. 3. The third thing is, what is implied in this holy violence. It implies three things.

1. Resolution of Will.
2. Vigour of Affection.
3. Strength of endeavour.

1. 1. *Resolution of the Will*, *Psal.* 119. 6. *I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgements.* Whatever is in the way to Heaven (though there be a Lion in the way) I will encounter it. Like a resolute Commander that chargeth through the whole body of

of the Army. The Chriſtian is reſolved, come on it what will, he will have Heaven. Where there is this reſolution, danger muſt be deſpiſed, difficulties trampled upon, terrours contemned*. This is the firſt thing in holy violence, reſolution of will, I will have Heaven whatever it coſt me; and this reſolution muſt be in the ſtrength of Chriſt.

* *Qui Regni Dei deſiderio tenentur, violentiâ quâdam irrumpunt ut participes illius fiant cum diſpendio vitæ.* Munſter.

Reſolution is like the biaſs to the bowl, which carries it ſtrongly. Where there is but half a reſolution, a will to be ſaved, and a will to follow ſin, it is impoſſible to be violent for Heaven. If a traveller be unreſolved, ſometimes he will ride this way, ſometimes that; he is violent for neither.

2. *Vigour of the Affections.* The will proceeds upon *Reaſon**; the judgement being informed of the excellency of a ſtate of Glory, and the will being reſolved upon a voyage to that holy Land, now the affections follow, and they are on fire in paſſionate longings after Heaven. The Affections are violent

2.

* *Voluntas ſequitur dictamen intellectûs.*

lent things*, *Pſal.* 42. 2. *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God.* The Rabbins note here, that *David* ſaith not, *My ſoul hungreth*, but *thirſteth*†; becauſe naturally we are more impatient of thirſt than hunger. See in what a rapid violent motion *Davids* affections were carried after God. The affections are like the wings of the bird, which make the ſoul ſwift in its flight after glory: where the affections are ſtirred up, there is offering violence to Heaven.

* *Qui vim facit, vehementi ſtudio properat.* Ambr. in Luc. lib. 8.

† Kimchi, Aben-ezra.

3. 3. This violence implies *ſtrength of endeavour*, when we ſtrive for ſalvation as about a matter of life and death. 'Tis eaſie to talk of Heaven, but not to get to Heaven; we muſt *operam navare*, put forth all our ſtrength; nay, call in the help of Heaven to this work.

4. 4. The fourth thing is, how many waies a Chriſtian muſt offer violence; four waies.

He muſt offer violence
1. To Himſelf.
2. To the World.
3. To Satan.
4. To Heaven

1. He

1. He must offer violence to *Himself.* This self-violence consists in two things.

1. Mortification of sin.
2. Provocation to duty.

1. Offering violence to ones self in a spiritual sense, consists in *mortification of sin: Self* is the *flesh*, this we must offer violence to. * *Hierom*, *Chrysostom*, *Theophilact* do all expound taking Heaven by force, *the mortifying the flesh*: the flesh is a bosom-traitor, it is like the *Trojan* Horse within the walls which doth all the mischief. The flesh is a sly enemy; at first it is *dulce venenum*, afterwards *scorpio pungens*, it kills by embracing. The embraces of the flesh are like the Ivy embracing the Oak, which sucks out the strength of it for its own leaves and berries: So the flesh by its soft embraces, sucks out all heart for good, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit.* The pampering of the flesh, is the quenching of Gods Spirit. The flesh choaks and stifles holy motions: the flesh sides with Satan, and is true to his interest. There's a party within that will not pray, that will not believe. The flesh inclines us more to

1.

* *Regno vis inferri non potest, nisi & nobis ipsis vim inferamus.* Brugens.

believe a temptation than a promiſe. There needs no wind to blow to ſin, when this tide within is ſo ſtrong to carry us thither. The fleſh being ſo near to us, its counſels are more attractive: no chain of Adamant binds ſo faſt as the chain of luſt. *Alexander*, who was *Victor mundi*, Conquerour of the world, was *captivus vitiorum*, led captive by vice. Now a man muſt offer violence to his fleſhly deſires, if he will be ſaved, *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth.* * The mortifying and killing ſin at the root, is when we not only forbear the *Acts* of ſin, but hate the *in-being*. *Plurimi peccata radunt non eradicant.* Bern.

* *Membra Terrena vocat Apoſtolus affectus pravos, hi enim ſunt quaſi membra veteris hominis.* Lap.

Felix mors quæ vitam non aufert ſed transfert in melius.

Nay, where ſin hath received its deadly wound, and is in part abated, yet the work of mortification is not to be laid aſide *. The Apoſtle perſwades the believing *Romans* to *mortifie the deeds of the fleſh*, *Rom.* 8. 13. In the beſt of Saints there is ſomething needs mortifying; much pride, envy, paſſion; therefore mortification

* *Carnis deſideria non uno ictu ſed ſenſim reſecanda ſunt.* Corn. Lap.

tification is called crucifixion, *Gal.*5.24. which is not done ſuddenly: every day ſome limb of the *body of death* muſt drop off*. Nothing harder than a Rock (ſaith *Cyrill*) yet in the clefts thereof ſome weed or other will faſten its roots. None ſtronger than a Believer, yet do what he can, ſin will faſten its roots in him, and ſpring out ſometimes by inordinate deſires. There is ſomething needs mortifying. Hence it was St. *Paul* did ὑπωπιάζειν, *beat down his body*, by prayer, watching, faſting, 1 *Cor.*9.27.

* *In quantum non peperceris tibi, in tantum tibi Deus parcet.* Tertul.

Metaphoræ à pugilibus ſumptæ. Chemnit.

But, is it not ſaid, *Epheſ.* 5.29. *No man ever hated his own fleſh?* *Queſt.*

As fleſh is taken *Phyſically* for the bodily compages or conſtitution, ſo it is to be cheriſhed; but as fleſh is taken *Theologically* for the impure luſtings of the fleſh; ſo a man muſt hate his own fleſh. The Apoſtle ſaith, Fleſhly luſts *war againſt the ſoul*, 1 *Pet.* 2.11. If the fleſh doth war againſt us, good reaſon we ſhould war againſt the fleſh. *Reſp.*

How may one do to offer violence to himſelf in mortifying the fleſh? Queſt.

1. Withdraw the fuel that may make luſt burn*. Avoid all temptations. Take *Anſw.*

* *Paſcitur libido deliciis, vino accenditur.* Ambroſe, lib. 1. de pœnit.

heed of that which doth nouriſh ſin. He that would ſuppreſs the Gout or Stone, avoids thoſe meats which are noxious. They who pray they may not be led into temptation, muſt not lead themſelves into temptation.

2. Fight againſt fleſhly luſts with ſpiritual weapons: faith and prayer. The beſt way to combate with ſin, is, upon our knees. Run to the promiſe, *Rom.* 6. 14. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you:* or as the Greek word is, it ſhall not *Lord* it. Beg ſtrength of Chriſt, *Phil.* 9. 13.* *Sampſon's* ſtrength lay in his hair, ours lies in our Head Chriſt. This is one way of offering violence to ones ſelf by mortification. This is a myſterie to the *major* part of the world, who do rather gratifie the fleſh than mortifie it.

ἐ, κυριεύσει.

* πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ χριστῷ.

2. 2. The ſecond thing wherein offering violence to a mans ſelf conſiſts, is, *in provocation to duty.* Then we offer holy violence to our ſelves, when we excite and provoke our ſelves to that which is good. This is called in Scripture, a *ſtirring up our ſelves to take hold of God, Iſa.* 64. 7. *. Conſider

* מתעור *Qui ſe ipſum exſuſcitet ſummo animi conatu.* Forerius.

1. What

1. What abſolute need there is to ſtir up our ſelves to holy duties. 1.

In reſpect of the ſluggiſhneſs of our hearts to that which is ſpiritual; blunt tools need whetting; a dull creature needs ſpurs. Our hearts are dull and heavy in the things of God, therefore we had need ſpur them on, and provoke them to that which is good. The fleſh hinders from duty: when we would pray, the fleſh reſiſts; when we ſhould ſuffer, the fleſh draws back. How hard is it ſometimes to get leave of our hearts to ſeek God? Jeſus Chriſt went more willingly to the Croſs, than we do to the Throne of Grace. Had not we need then provoke our ſelves to duty? If our hearts are ſo unſtrung in Religion, we had need prepare and put them in tune. 1.

The exerciſes of Gods Worſhip are contrary to nature; therefore there muſt be a provoking of our ſelves to them. The motion of the ſoul to ſin is *natural*, but its motion towards Heaven is *violent*. The ſtone moves eaſily to the Center; it hath an innate propenſeneſs downward; but to draw up a Milſtone into the Air, is done by 2.

violence, becauſe it is againſt nature: ſo to lift up the heart to Heaven in duty, is done by violence, and we muſt provoke our ſelves to it.

2. 2. What it is to provoke our ſelves to duty.

1. 1. It is to awaken our ſelves, and ſhake off ſpiritual ſloth. Holy *David* awakens his tongue and heart when he went about Gods ſervice, *Pſal.* 57. 9. *Awake up my glory, I my ſelf will awaken early* *. He found a ſomnolency and dulneſs in his ſoul, therefore did provoke himſelf to duty. *I my ſelf will awake early.* Chriſtians, though they are raiſed from the death of ſin, yet often they fall aſleep.

* *Et linguam alloquitur, & citheram & cor.* Muſcul.

2. 2. Provoking our ſelves to duty implies an uniting, and rallying together all the powers of our ſoul, and ſeting them on work in the exerciſes of Religion. A man ſaith to his thoughts, Be you fixed on God in this duty; and to his affections, Do you ſerve the Lord *without diſtraction.* Matters of Religion are done with intenſeneſs of Spirit *.

* ἐν ἐντεύξει. Act. 26. 7.

3. 3. The third thing is to ſhew the ſeveral duties of Chriſtianity, wherein we

we muſt provoke and offer violence to our ſelves: I ſhall name ſeven.

1. We muſt provoke our ſelves to *reading of the Word.* What an infinite mercy is it that God hath honoured us with the Scriptures! The barbarous *Indians* have not the *Oracles of God* made known to them: they have the *golden Mines*, but not the Scriptures, which are more to be deſired than *much fine gold*, *Pſal.* 19. 10. Our Saviour bids us *ſearch the Scriptures*, *Joh.* 5. 39. We muſt not read theſe holy lines careleſly *, as if they did not concern us, or run them over haſtily; as *Iſrael* ate the Paſſeover *in haſte*, but peruſe them with reverence and ſerioufneſs. The noble *Bereans* did *ſearch the Scriptures daily*, *Acts* 17. 11. The Scripture is the *Pandect* of divine Knowledge; it is the rule and touchſtone of truth *; out of this well we draw the water of life. To provoke to a diligent reading of the Word, labour to have a right notion of Scripture. 1.

* *Quærit Scriptura lectorem attentum, ſcitantem autem reſpuit.* Rivet, Iſagoge ad Script.

* κάνων τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκλινὴς. Iræn.

Read the Word as a book made by God himſelf. It is θεόπνευς@, given *by divine inſpiration*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. It is the Library of the Holy Ghoſt. The 1.

Prophets and Apoſtles were but θεοῦ γραμματεῖς, Gods amanuenſes or notaries to write the Law at his mouth. The word is of divine original *, and reveals the *deep things of God* to us. That there is a numen or deity is ingraven in mans heart, and is to be read in the Book of the creatures;

* *Differt Scriptura ſpecificè à ſymbolis fidei quia per ſe vera eſt, illa autem per conſenſum ad eam quæ eſt regula & menſura omnis veritatis revelatæ.* Riv.

—*quælibet herba Deum*——

But who this God is, and the Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead, is infinitely above the light of reaſon, only God himſelf could make this known. So for the Incarnation of Chriſt, God and man hypoſtatically united in one perſon; the myſtery of imputed Righteouſneſs; the doctrine of Faith: what Angel in Heaven, who but God himſelf could reveal theſe things to us? How may this provoke to diligence and ſeriouſneſs in reading the Word which is divinely inſpired. Other Books may be made by holy men, but this Book is indighted by the Holy Ghoſt.

2. Read the Word as a Perfect Rule of Faith;

Faith; it contains all things eſſential to ſalvation*. *I adore the fulneſs of Scripture*, ſaith *Tertullian*. The Word teacheth us how to pleaſe God; how to order our converſation in the world: it inſtructs us in all things that belong either to Prudence or Piety. How ſhould we read the Word with care and reverence, when it contains a perfect model and platform of Religion; and is able to *make us wiſe to ſalvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 17.

* *Adoro plenitudinem Scripturæ.* Tertull. Pſa. 19. 7.

3. When you read the Word, look on it as a ſoul-enriching treaſury. Search here as for a *vein of Silver*, *Pro.* 2. 4. In this word are ſcattered many divine Aphoriſms, gather them up as ſo many Jewels. This bleſſed Book helps to enrich you; it fills your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace: it ſtores you with Promiſes: a man may be rich in bonds. In this *field* the *Pearl of Price* is hid: what are all the worlds riches to theſe? Iſlands of Spices, Coaſts of Pearl, Rocks of Diamonds? Theſe are but the riches that Reprobates may have, but the Word gives us thoſe riches which Angels have.

4. Read the Word as a Book of Evidences.

dences. How carefully doth one read over his Evidences? Would you know whether God be your God? ſearch the Records of Scripture, 1 *Joh.* 3. 24. *Hereby we know he abides in us by his Spirit he hath given us.* Would you know whether you are *heirs of the Promiſe?* you muſt find it in theſe ſacred Writings, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 13, *He hath choſen us to ſalvation through ſanctification.* They who are veſſels of grace, ſhall be veſſels of glory.

5. Look upon the Word as a ſpiritual Magazine, out of which you fetch all your weapons to fight againſt ſin and Satan. 1. Here are weapons to fight againſt *ſin.* The Word of God is a conſecrated ſword, that cuts aſunder the luſts of the heart. When Pride begins to lift up it ſelf, the *Sword of the Spirit* deſtroies this ſin, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *God reſiſts the proud.* When Paſſion vents it ſelf, the Word of God, like *Hercules* club, beats down this angry fury, *Eccleſ.* 5. 9. *Anger reſts in the boſom of fools.* When Luſt boils, the Word of God cools that intemperate heat, *Epheſ.* 5. 5. *No unclean perſon hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt.* 2. Here are weapons to fight

fight againſt *Satan*. The Word fenceth off temptation. When the Devil tempted Chriſt, he three times wounded the old Serpent with the Sword of the Spirit. *'Tis written, Mat.* 4. 7. Satan never ſooner foils a Chriſtian, than when he is unarmed, and without Scripture-weapons.

Falſas de Scripturis Diaboli ſagittas, veris Scripturarum frangit clypeis. Brugenſ.

Look upon the Word as a ſpiritual Glaſs to dreſs your ſelves by: It is a Looking-glaſs for the blind, *Pſa.* 19. 8. * In other glaſſes you may ſee your faces; in this glaſs you may ſee your hearts, *Pſal.* 119. 104. *Through thy Precepts I get underſtanding*. This Looking-glaſs of the Word clearly repreſents Chriſt: it ſets him forth in his perſon, nature, offices, as moſt precious and eligible, *Cant.* 5. 16. He is *altogether lovely*; he is a wonder of beauty, a Paradiſe of delight. Chriſt who was vailed over in types, is clearly revealed in the Glaſs of the Scriptures. 6.

* *Splendoris ſui radiis cœcitatem depellit.* Rivet.

ὅλος ἐπιθυμία.

Look upon the Word as a Book of ſpiritual Receipts. *Baſil* compares the Word to an Apothecaries ſhop, which hath all kind of Medicines and Antidotes*. If you find your ſelves dead in duty, 7.

* *Omnis animi morbis in Scriptura habet medicinam.*

duty, here is a *Recipe*, *Pſal.* 119. 50. *Thy Word hath quickned me.* If you find your hearts hard, the Word doth liquifie and melt them; therefore is compared to *fire* for its mollifying power, *Jer.* 23. 29. If you are poiſoned with ſin, here is an herb to expel it.

8. Look upon the Word as a ſoveraign Elixar to comfort you in diſtreſs; it comforts you againſt all your ſins, temptations and afflictions. What are the Promiſes, but divine Cordials to revive fainting ſouls. A gracious heart goes feeding on a Promiſe as *Sampſon* on the Hony-comb, *Judg.* 14. 9. The Word comforts againſt ſickneſs and death, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55. *O death, where is thy ſting?* A Chriſtian dies embracing the Promiſe, as *Simeon* did Chriſt, *Heb.* 11. 16.

* καθαρτήριον ἀλεξίακον, ἀντίδοτον τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν. Ignatius.

9. Read the Word as the laſt Will and Teſtament of Chriſt. Here are many Legacies given to them that love him; pardon of ſin, adoption, conſolation: this Will is in force being ſealed in Chriſts blood. With what ſeriouſneſs doth a Child read over the Will and Teſtament of his Father, that he may ſee what is left him.

Read

Read it as a Book by which you must be judged, *John* 12.48. *The Word I have ſpoken, ſhall judge him at the laſt day.* They who live according to the Rules of this Book, ſhall be acquitted; they who live contrary to them, ſhall be condemned. There are two Books God will go by, the Book of Conſcience, and the Book of Scripture: the one ſhall be the Witneſs, and the other the Judge. How ſhould every Chriſtian then provoke himſelf to read this Book of God with care and devotion! This is that Book which God will proceed by at the laſt. They who fly from the Word as a Guide, ſhall be forced to ſubmit to it as a Judge. 10.

2. The ſecond duty of Religion wherein we muſt provoke our ſelves, is, in *Hearing of the Word.* We may bring our bodies to the Word with eaſe, but not our hearts without offering violence to our ſelves. When we come to the Word Preached, we come about a buſineſs of the higheſt importance, therefore ſtould ſtir up our ſelves and hear with the greateſt devotion. *Conſtantine* the Emperour was noted for his reverend attention to the Word, *Luk.* 19.48. 2.

All

All the people were attentive to hear him. In the Greek it is, *they hanged upon his lip**. When the Word is dispensed, we are now to lift up the everlasting doors of our hearts, that the King of glory may enter in.

* ἐξεκρέμαλο, *Pendebat ab ore ejus, tanquam extra se raptus præ aviditate.* Brug.

1. How far are they from offering violence to themselves in hearing, who scarce mind what is said, as if they were not at all concerned in the business: they come to Church more for *custom* than *conscience*, *Ezek.* 33. 31. *They come to thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and hear thy words, but they will not do them.* If we could tell them of a rich purchase, or of some place of preferment, they would diligently attend; but when the Word of Life is Preached, they disregard it.

2. 2. How far are they from offering violence to themselves in hearing, who come to the Word in a dull, drowsie manner, as if they came to Church to take a *Receipt* to make them sleep. The Word is to feed; it is strange to sleep at meat. The Word judgeth men; it is strange for a prisoner to fall asleep at the Bar. To such sleepy hearers God may

may ſay, *Sleep on.* He may ſuffer them to be ſo ſtupified, that no Ordinance ſhall awaken them, *Mat.* 13. 25. *While men ſlept, the enemy came and ſowed Tares.* The Devil is never aſleep, but ſows the tares of ſin in a drowſie hearer.

That we may, when we come to the Word, offer violence to our ſelves, and ſtir up our ſelves to hear with devotion, conſider,

1. It is God that ſpeaks to us. If a Judge give a charge upon the bench, all liſten. If a King ſpeaks, all give attention. When we come to the Word, we ſhould think thus with our ſelves, *We are to hear God in this Preacher.* Therefore Chriſt is ſaid, *Now* to ſpeak to us from Heaven, *Heb.* 12. 25. Chriſt ſpeaks in his Miniſters, as a King ſpeaketh in the perſon of his Embaſſadour. When *Samuel* knew it was the Lord that ſpake to him, he lent an ear, 2 *Sam.* 3. 5. *Speak Lord thy Servant heareth.* They who ſlight God ſpeaking in his Word, ſhall hear him ſpeaking in his wrath, *Pſalm* 2. 5. *Then ſhall he ſpeak to them in his wrath.*

2. Let us conſider the weightineſs of the

the matters delivered to us *. As *Moſes* ſaid to *Iſrael*, *Deut.* 30. 19. *I call Heaven and Earth to Record this day, that I have ſet before you life and death.* We preach to men of Chriſt, and the eternal recompences; here are the *magnalia Legis*, the *weighty matters of the Law*; and doth not all this call for ſerious attention? There is a great deal of difference between a Letter of news read to us, and a Letter of ſpecial buſineſs, wherein our whole land and eſtate is concerned. In the Word preached our ſalvation is concerned; here we are inſtructed to the Kingdom of God, and if ever we will be ſerious, it ſhould be now, *Deut.* 32. 47. *It is not a vain thing for you, becauſe it is your life.*

* χρὴ νήφειν καὶ ἐγρηγορέναι, καὶ μὴ μόνον χρυσίου καὶ τῶν ἀπολλυμένων φείδεσθαι, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς μελλούσης ζωῆς. Chryſoſt.

3. If the Word be not regarded, it will not be remembred *. Many complain they cannot remember, here is the reaſon, God puniſheth their careleſneſs in hearing, with forgetfulneſs. He ſuffers Satan to take away the Word from them, *Mat.* 13. 4. *The Fowls of the Air came and devoured the*

* *Mortem formidate æternam ſi verba vitæ, i. e. alimenta juſtitiæ in memoriæ arca non Tenetis.* Greg.

the ſeed. The Devil is no recuſant, he comes to Church, but it is not for any good intent; he gets away the Word from men. How many have been robbed of the Sermon and their ſouls both at once.

4. It may be the laſt time that ever God will ſpeak to us in his Word: it may be the laſt Sermon that ever we ſhall hear; and we may go from the place of hearing, to the place of judgeing. Did people think thus when they come into the Houſe of God, perhaps this will be the laſt time that God will counſel us about our ſouls; the laſt time that ever we ſhall ſee our Miniſter's face, with what devotion would they come! how would their affections be all on fire in hearing! We give great attention to the laſt ſpeeches of friends, A Parents dying words are received as Oracles. Oh let all this provoke us to diligence in hearing: let us think, this may be the laſt time that *Aarons Bell* ſhall ſound in our ears, and before another day, we ſhall be in another world.

The third Duty wherein we are to offer violence to our ſelves, is in Prayer. 3. *Duty.*

Prayer is a duty which keeps the trade of Religion agoing. When we either joyn in prayer with others, or pray alone, we must use holy violence; not eloquence in prayer but violence carries it. * *Theodorus* speaking of *Luther*, Once (saith he) I over-heard him in prayer, but, (good God) with what life and spirit did he pray! It was with so much Reverence as if he were speaking to God, yet with so much confidence, as if he had been speaking to his friend. There must be a stirring up of the heart

* *Sit oratio pura, fervida, &c.* Prosper.

1. To Prayer.
2. In Prayer.

1. A stirring up of the heart *to* Prayer, *Job* 11. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him.* This *preparing* our heart is by holy thoughts and ejaculations. The Musitian first tunes his Instrument before he playes.

2. There must be a stirring up of the heart *in* Prayer. Prayer is a lifting up of the mind and soul to God *, which cannot be done aright without offering violence to ones self. The names given to prayer import violence. It is called

* *Elevatio mentis ad Deum.*

wrestling,

wreſtling *, *Gen.* 32. 24. and *pouring out the ſoul*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 15. both which imply vehemency. The affection is required as well as the invention. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of an *effectual fervent* prayer, which is a parallel phraſe to *offering violence*.

* ויאבק

Δέησις ἐνεργουμένη.

Alas, how far are they from offering violence to themſelves in prayer, 1. That give God a *dead heartleſs* prayer *. God would not have the *blind* offered, *Mal.* 1. 8. As good offer the *blind* as the *dead*. Some are half aſleep when they pray; and will a ſleepy prayer ever awaken God *? Such as mind not their own prayers, how do they think that God ſhould mind them? Thoſe prayers God likes beſt which come ſeething hot from the heart.

* *Thuribulum ſine Prunis.* Luth.

* Pſal. 144. 23.

2. How far are they from offering violence, that give God *diſtracted* prayer? while they are praying, they are thinking of their ſhop and trade *. How can he ſhoot right whoſe eye is quite off the mark? *Ezek.* 33. 31. *Their heart goes after their covetouſneſs.* Many are caſting up their accounts in prayer, as *Hierom* once complained of himſelf. How can God be pleaſed with this?

* *Vtinam tèv oras quando aliud in corde non cogitas.* Bern. de orat.

Will a King endure that while his ſubject is delivering a petition, and ſpeaking to him, he ſhould be playing with a feather? When we ſend our hearts on an errand to Heaven, how often do they loiter and play by the way? This is matter of bluſhing; that we may offer violence to our ſelves, and by fervency feather the wing of prayer: let theſe things be duly weighed.

1. The Majeſty of God with whom we have to do. He ſees how it is with us in prayer, whether we are deeply affected with thoſe things we pray for. *The King came in to ſee the gueſts*, *Mat.* 22. 11. So when we go to pray, the King of glory comes in to ſee in what frame we are: he hath a window which looks into our breaſts, and if hee ſees a dead heart, he may turn a deaf ear. Nothing will ſooner make Gods anger wax hot than a cold prayer.

2. Prayer without fervency and violence, is no prayer; it is *ſpeaking*, not *praying*. Liveleſs prayer is no more prayer, than the picture of a man is a man. To ſay a prayer is not to pray, *Aſchanius* taught his Parrot the Lords Prayer. St. *Ambroſe* ſaith well, *It is*

the

the life and affection in a duty that baptizeth it, and gives it a name. 'Tis the violence and wreſtling of the affections that make it a prayer, elſe it is no prayer. But a man may ſay as *Pharaoh, I have dreamed a dream, Gen.* 41. 15. *Affectus operi nomen imponit.* Ambroſ.

3. The zeal and violence of the affections in prayer beſt ſuits with Gods nature. He is a *Spirit, John* 4. 24. and ſure that prayer which is full of life and ſpirit, is the *ſavoury meat he loves,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. *Spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God**. Spirituality and fervency in duty, is like the ſpirits of wine, which are the more refined part of the wine.

* *Cùm flammis affluere cœperit oratio, in odoriferos expirat fumos; neſcit itinere recto ad Deum ire oratio quæ ſuccenſa non fuerit; ſi frigida ſubitò relabitur.* Bern. ſuper Cant.

Bodily exerciſe profits nothing. 'Tis not the ſtretching of the lungs, but the vehemency of the deſire makes muſick in Gods ears *. * Epheſ. 5. 19.

4. Conſider the need we have of thoſe things which we aſk in prayer. We come to aſk the favour of God; and if we have not his love, all that we enjoy is curſed to us. We pray that our ſouls may be waſhed in Chriſts blood; and if he waſh us not, *we have no part in him**. Theſe are ſuch mer- * Joh. 13. 8.

cies, that if God deny us, we are for ever undone. Therefore what violence had we need put forth in prayer? when will a man be earneſt, if not when he is begging for his life?

5. Let it provoke violence in prayer to conſider thoſe things which we ask, God hath a mind to grant. If a Son aſk nothing but what his Father is willing to beſtow, he may be the more earneſt in his ſuit. We go to God for pardon of ſin, and no work more pleaſing to him than to ſeal pardons. Mercy is *his delight*, *Micah* 7. 18. We pray to God for an holy heart, and this prayer is according to his will, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 3. *This is the will of God, your ſanctification.* We pray that God would give us an heart to love him. How pleaſing muſt this requeſt needs be to God! This, if any thing may excite prayer, and carry it in a *fiery Chariot* up to Heaven, when we know we pray for nothing but what God is more willing to grant than we are to aſk.

6. No mercy can be beſtowed on us but in a way of prayer. Mercy is purchaſed by Chriſts blood, but it is conveyed by prayer. All the promiſes are bonds

bonds made over to us, but prayer puts theſe bonds in ſuit. The Lord had told *Iſrael* with what rich mercy he would beſpangle them; he would bring them to their native Country, and bring them thither with *new hearts*, *Ezek.* 36. Yet this Tree of the Promiſe would not drop its fruit, till ſhaken with the hand of prayer, *verſ.* 37. For *all this will I yet be enquired.* The breaſt of Gods mercy is full, but prayer muſt draw the breaſt. Surely, if all other waies are blocked up, there's no good to be done without prayer; how ſhould we ply this oar, and by an holy violence ſtir up our ſelves to take hold of God.

7. 'Tis only violence and intenſeneſs of ſpirit in prayer hath the promiſe of mercy affixed to it, *Mat.* 7. 7. *Knock and it ſhall be opened.* Knocking is a violent motion. The *Ædiles* among the *Romans* had their doors alwaies ſtanding open, that all who had petitions might have free acceſs to them. God's heart is ever open to fervent prayer. Let us then be fired with zeal, and with Chriſt pray *yet more earneſtly* *. 'Tis violence in prayer makes Heaven-gates fly

* ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο.

open, and fetcheth in whatever mercies we ſtand in need of.

8. The large returns God hath given to violent prayer *. This Dove ſent to Heaven, hath often brought an Olive-leave in its mouth, *Pſal.* 34. 6. This *poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.* Crying prayer prevails*. *Daniel* in the *Den* prayed and prevailed. Prayer did ſhut the Lions mouth, and open the Lions Den *. Fervent prayer (ſaith one) hath a kind of Omnipotency in it. *Sozomen* ſaith of *Apollonius*, that he never aſked any thing of God in all his life that he obtained not. *Sleidan* reports of *Luther*, that perceiving the intereſt of Religion to be low, he betook himſelf to prayer; at length riſing off his knees, he came out of his Cloſet triumphantly, ſaying to his friends, *Vicimus, Vicimus, We have overcome, We have overcome.* At which time it was obſerved, there came out a Proclamation from *Charls* the Fifth, that none ſhould be further moleſted for the Profeſ-

* *Nemo ad Deum precans & flens acceſſit, qui non quod petiit accepit.*

* *Oratio pura cœlos penetrans vacua non redibit.* Aug. in Serm.

* *Cœlos tundimus, Deum tangimus, miſericordiam extorquemus.* Tertull. Apol.

Joh. Sleid. Comment.

Profeſſion of the Goſpel. How may this encourage us, and make us hoiſe up the ſails of prayer, when others of the Saints have had ſuch good returns from the holy Land.

That we may put forth this bleſſed violence in prayer, it is requiſite there be a renewed principle of grace. If the perſon be graceleſs, no wonder the prayer is heartleſs. The body while it is dead hath no heat in it: while a man is dead in ſin, he can have no heat in duty.

2. That we may be the more violent in prayer, it is good to pray with a ſenſe of our wants. A Begger that is pinched with want, will be earneſt in craving an alms. Chriſtian, review thy wants; thou wanteſt an humble ſpiritual frame of heart; thou wanteſt the light of Gods countenance; the ſenſe of want will quicken prayer. That man can never pray fervently, that doth not pray feelingly. How earneſt was *Sampſon* for water, when he was ready to die, *Judg.* 15. 18. *I die for thirſt.*

3. If we would be violent in prayer, let us beg a violent wind. The Spirit of God is reſembled to a *mighty ruſhing wind,*

* Δεῖ τὴν χάειν τῷ πνεύματι & ἕλκουσαν εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐπιῤῥῦσαι & θαῤῥῆναι, &c. Chryſ. de prec.

wind *, *Acts* 2. 2. Then we are violent, when this bleſſed wind fills our ſails, *Jude v.* 20. *Praying in the Holy Ghoſt.* If any fire be in our Sacrifice, it comes down from Heaven.

4. *Duty.* The fourth Duty wherein we muſt offer violence to our ſelves, is *Meditation*; a duty wherein the very heart and life-blood of Religion lies. St *Bernard* calls meditation *animæ viaticum*, a bait by the way *. And another ſaith, μελέτη τὸ πᾶν *. Meditation may be thus deſcribed; it is an holy exerciſe of the mind, whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance, and do ſeriouſly ponder upon them, and apply them to our ſelves. In Meditation there are two things.

* Bern. in Cant.

* Periand.

1. A Chriſtians retiring of himſelf, a locking himſelf up from the world. Meditation is a work which cannot be done in a croud.

2. It is a ſerious thinking on God. It is not a few tranſient thoughts that are quickly gone, but a fixing and ſtaying the mind upon heavenly objects: This cannot be done without exciting all the powers of our ſouls, and offering violence to our ſelves. We

We are the more to provoke our ſelves to this duty, becauſe

1. Meditation is ſo croſs to fleſh and blood. Naturally we ſhun holy meditation. To meditate on worldly ſecular things, if it were all day, we can do it without any diverſion *: But to have our thoughts fixed on God, how hard do we find it? how do our hearts quarrel with this duty? what pleas and excuſes have we to ſhift it off? The natural averſeneſs from this duty ſhews, we are to offer violence to our ſelves in it.

* *Acies mentis ad leviſſima quæque retunditur & reſilit.* Mornæus.

2. Satan doth what he can to hinder this duty. He is an enemy to meditation. The Devil cares not how much we hear, nor how little we meditate. Hearing begets knowledge, but meditation begets devotion. Meditation doth ballaſt the heart, and make it ſerious; and Satan labours to keep the heart from being ſerious. What need therefore is there of offering violence to our ſelves in this duty? But me-thinks I hear ſome ſay, when they ſit alone they know not what to meditate of; I ſhall therefore furniſh them with matter of meditation.

1. Meditate

1. 1. Meditate ſeriouſly upon the corruption of your nature. We have loſt that pure quinteſſential frame of ſoul that once we had. There is a Sea of ſin in us. Our nature is a ſource and ſeminary of all evil *: like *Peter's ſheet*, wherein were *wild beaſts and creeping things*, *Acts* 10. 12. This ſin cleaves to us as a leproſie. This original pollution makes us guilty before the Lord; and though we ſhould never commit actual ſin, this merits Hell. The meditation of this would be a means to pull down our pride. Nay, even thoſe that have grace have cauſe to walk humbly, becauſe they have more corruption in them than grace: their dark ſide is broader than their light.

* *O quam multas feras in hominis corde, tanquam in abditiſſima ſylva latitantes detegas?* Mornæus.

2. 2. Meditate ſeriouſly upon the death and paſſion of Chriſt *. His ſoul was over-caſt with a cloud of ſorrow when he was conflicting with his Fathers wrath; and all this we ſhould have ſuffered, *Iſa.* 53. 5. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions.* As *David* ſaid, *Lo I have ſinned, but theſe ſheep, what have they done?* 2 *Sam.* 24. 17.

* *Fodérunt latus Chriſti, — & per has rimas licet mihi ſugere mel de pétra.* Bern. in Cant.

So

So we have ſinned, but this Lamb of God, what had he done?

1. The ſerious meditation of this would produce Repentance. How could we look upon him *whom we have pierced*, and not mourn over him? When we conſider how dear our ſins coſt Chriſt; how ſhould we ſhed the blood of our ſins which ſhed Chriſt's blood?

2. The meditation of Chriſt's death would fire our hearts with love to Chriſt. What friend ſhall we love, if not him who died for us? His love to us made him cruel to himſelf. As *Rebecca* ſaid to *Jacob*, *Gen.* 27. 13. *Upon me, upon me be the curſe.* So ſaid Chriſt, *Upon me be the curſe*, that poor ſinners may inherit the bleſſing.

3. Meditate on your Evidences for Heaven. What have you to ſhew for Heaven, if you ſhould die this night? 3.
1. Was your heart ever thorowly convinced of ſin? Did you ever ſee your ſelf loſt without Chriſt? Conviction is the firſt ſtep to converſion, *Joh.* 8. 16.
2. Hath God ever made you willing to take Chriſt upon his own terms, *Zach.* 6. 13. *He ſhall be a Prieſt upon his Throne.* Are you as willing that Chriſt ſhould be

be upon the Throne of your heart to rule, as a Prieſt at the Altar to intercede. Are you willing to renounce thoſe ſins to which the biaſs of your heart doth naturally incline? Can you ſet thoſe ſins as *Uriah* in the forefront of the battel to be ſlain? Are you willing to take Chriſt *for better for worſe*; to take him with his Croſs, and to avouch Chriſt in the worſt of times. 3. Have you the indwelling-preſence of the Spirit? If you have, what hath Gods Spirit done in you? Hath it made you *of another ſpirit?* meek, merciful, humble? Is it a transforming Spirit? Hath it left the impreſs of its own holineſs upon you? Theſe are good evidences for Heaven. By theſe, as by a ſpiritual touch-ſtone, you may know whether you have grace or no. Beware of falſe Evidences. None are further from having the *true Pearl*, than they that content themſelves with the counterfeit.

4. 4. Meditate upon the uncertainty of all ſublunary comforts. Creature-delights have their flux, and reflux. How oft doth the Sun of worldly pomp and grandure go down at noon. *Xerxes* was forced

forced to fly away in a ſmall veſſel, who but a little before wanted Sea-room for his Navy. We ſay every thing is mutable; but who meditates upon it? The world is reſembled to a *Sea of glaſs mingled with fire*, *Rev.* 15. 2. Glaſs is ſlippery, it hath no ſure footing: and Glaſs mingled with fire is ſubject to conſume. All creatures are fluid and uncertain, and cannot be made to fix. What is become of the glory of *Athens*, the pomp of *Troy?* 1 *John* 2. 17. *The world paſſeth* * *away*: It ſlides away as a ſhip in full ſail. How quickly doth the Scene alter? and a low ebb ſucceed an high tide? There's no truſting to any thing. Health may be turned to ſickneſs; friends may die; riches may take wings. We are ever upon the Tropicks. The ſerious meditation of this, would 1. Keep us from being ſo deceived by the world. We are ready to ſet up our reſt here, *Pſal.* 49. 11. *Their inward thought is that their houſes ſhall continue for ever.* We are apt to think that our *Mountain ſtands ſtrong*. We dream of an *earthly Eternity*. Alas, did we meditate how caſual and uncertain theſe things are *, we ſhould not be ſo often deluded. Have not

* ἐν εὐταξίᾳ οὐ μόνον.

οὐδὲν φαινόμενον ἀνώνιον. Ignat. Ep.

not we ſeen great diſappointments, and where we have thought to ſuck hony, there we have drunk wormwood?

2. The Meditation of the uncertainty of all things under the Sun, would much moderate our affections to them. Why ſhould we ſo eagerly purſue an uncertainty? Many take care to get a great eſtate; it is uncertain whether they ſhall keep it. The fire may break in where the thief cannot: or if they do keep it, it is a queſtion whether they ſhall have the comfort of it. They lay up for a child, that child may die; or if he live, he may prove a burden. This ſeriouſly meditated on, would cure the dropſie of coveteouſneſs; and make us ſit looſe to that which hangs ſo looſe, and is ready to drop off from us.

3. The meditation of this uncertainty would make us look after a certainty; That is, the getting of grace. This holy *anointing abides*, 1 *John* 2. 27. Grace is a flower of Eternity. —*Non fertur ad umbras inclyta virtus.*——— Death doth not deſtroy grace, but tranſplant it, and make it grow in a better ſoil. He that hath true holineſs, can

no

no more loſe it than the Angels can which are fixed Stars in glory.

5. Meditate of Gods ſeverity againſt ſin. Every Arrow in Gods quiver is ſhot againſt it *. Sin burned *Sodom*, drowned the old world. Sin kindles Hell. If when a ſpark of God's wrath flies into a man's conſcience, it is ſo terrible, what is it then when God *ſtirs up all his wrath? Pſal.* 78. 39. The meditation of this would fright us out of our ſins. There cannot be ſo much ſweetneſs in ſin, as there is ſting. How dreadfull is God's anger! *Pſal.* 90. 11. *Who knoweth the power of his wrath?* All fire compared with the fire of God's wrath is painted & imaginary. O that every time we meddle with ſin, we would think with our ſelves we choſe the *bramble*, and fire will come out of this bramble to devour us.

* ὑπερβολὴ, ἐκεῖ χειμών. Chryſoſt.

6. Meditate on eternal life, 1 *John* 2. 25. *This is his promiſe, even eternal life.* Life is ſweet, and this word *Eternal* makes it ſweeter. This lies in the immediate viſion and fruition of God. 1. This is a *ſpiritual* life: it is oppoſite to that animal life which we live now. *Here* we hunger and thirſt; but there

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we ſhall *hunger no more*, *Rev.* 7. 16. There is the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb, which will not only ſatisfie hunger, but prevent it. That bleſſed life to come doth not conſiſt in ſenſual delights, meat, and drink, and muſick; nor in the comfort of Relations; but the ſoul will be wholly ſwallowed up in God, and acquiſce in him with infinite complacency. As when the Sun appears, the Stars vaniſh: So when God ſhall appear in his glory, and fill the ſoul, then all earthly ſenſitive delights ſhall vaniſh. 2. It is a *glorious* life. The bodies of the Saints ſhall be enameld with glory: they ſhall be made like Chriſt's glorious body, *Phil.* 3. 21. And if the Cabinet be of ſuch curious needle-work, how rich ſhall the Jewel be that is put into it! how beſpangled with glory ſhall the ſoul be! Every Saint ſhall wear his white Robe, and have his Throne to ſit upon. Then God will put ſome of his own glory upon the Saints. Glory ſhall not only be revealed *to* them, but *in* them *, *Rom.* 8. 18. And this life of glory ſhall be crowned with eternity; what Angel can expreſs it! O let us often meditate on this.

* *Non tantum aderit gloria, ſed inerit.* Bern.

1. The

1. The meditation of eternal life would make us labour for a ſpiritual life. The child muſt be born before it is crowned. We muſt be *born of the Spirit*, before we are crowned with glory.

2. The meditation of eternal life would comfort us in regard of the ſhortneſs of natural life. Our life we live now, flies away as a ſhadow: It is called a *flower*, *Pſal.* 103. 15. a *vapour*, *Jam.* 4. 14. *Job* ſets forth fragil life very elegantly in three of the elements, *Land*, *Water*, *Air*, *Job* 9. 25, 26. Go to the Land, and there man's life is like a *ſwift Poſt*. Go to the Water, there man's life is like a *ſhip under ſail*. Look to the Air, and there man's life is like a *flying Eagle*. We are haſting to the grave. When our years do encreaſe, our life doth decreaſe *. Death creeps upon us by degrees. When our ſight grows dim, there death creeps in at the eye. When our hearing is bad, there death creeps in at the ear. When our legs tremble under us, there is death pulling down the main pillars of the houſe; but *eternal life* comforts us againſt the ſhortneſs of natural life. That life to come is ſubject

* *Cum vir creſcit vita decreſcit.* Seneca.

to no infirmities; it knows no period. We ſhall be *as the Angels of God*, capable of no mutation or change. Thus you have ſeen ſix noble ſubjects for your thoughts to expatiate upon.

But where is the meditating Chriſtian? Here I might lament the want of holy meditation. Moſt people live in a hurry; they are ſo diſtracted with the cares of the world, that they can find no time to meditate; or ſcarce aſk their ſouls how they do. We are not like the Saints in former ages. *David* did meditate in God's Precepts, *Pſal.* 119. 15. *Iſaac walked in the evening to meditate*, *Gen.* 24. 63. He did take a turn with God. What devout meditations do we read in St. *Auſtin* and *Anſelm?* but it is too much out of date among our modern Chriſtians.

——*Terras Aſtræa reliquit.*——

Thoſe beaſts under the Law which did not chew the cud were unclean. Such as do not chew the cud by holy meditation, are to be reckoned among the unclean. But I ſhall rather turn my *lamentation* into a *perſwaſion*, entreating Chriſtians

ſtians to offer violence to themſelves in this ſo neceſſary duty of meditation. *Pythagoras* ſequeſtred himſelf from all ſociety, and lived in a cave for a whole year, that he might meditate upon Philoſophy. How then ſhould we retire and lock up our ſelves at leaſt once a day, that we may meditate upon glory.

1. Meditation makes the Word preached to profit; it works it upon the conſciences. As the Bee ſucks the flower; ſo by meditation we ſuck out the ſweetneſs of a Truth. It is not the receiving of meat into the mouth; but the digeſting of it, makes it nutritive. So it is not the receiving the moſt excellent truths in at the ear, that nouriſheth our ſouls, but the digeſting them by meditation. Wine poured into a ſieve runs out. Many truths are loſt, becauſe Miniſters pour this Wine into ſieves, either into leaking memories, or feathery minds. Meditation is like a ſoaking rain, that goes to the root of a Tree, and makes it bring forth fruit.

2. Holy meditation quickens the affections, *Pſal.* 119. 97. *O how love I thy Law, it is my meditation all the day.* The reaſon our affections are ſo cold to

heavenly things, is becauſe we do not warm them at the fire of holy meditation. As the muſing on amorous objects makes the fire of luſt burn; the muſing on injuries makes the fire of revenge burn: ſo meditating on the tranſcendent beauties of Chriſt, would make our love to Chriſt flame forth.

3. Meditation hath a transforming power in it. The hearing of the Word may affect us; but the meditating of it doth transform us. Meditation ſtamps the impreſſion of divine truths upon our hearts. By meditating of God's holineſs, we grow holy. As *Jacob*'s Cattel by looking on the Rods, *conceived like the Rods:* ſo while by meditation we look upon God's purity, we are changed into his likeneſs, and are made partakers of his divine nature.

4. Meditation produceth reformation, *Pſal.* 119.59. *I thought on my waies and turned my feet unto thy Teſtimonies.* Did but people meditate on the damnableneſs of ſin; did they but think when they meddle with it, there is a Rope at the end of it, which will hang them eternally in Hell, they would break off a courſe of ſinning, and become

come new creatures. Let all this perſwade to holy meditation. I dare be bold to ſay, if men would ſpend but one quarter of an hour every day in contemplating heavenly objects, it would leave a mighty impreſſion upon them, and through the bleſſing of God might prove the beginning of an happy converſion.

But how ſhall we do to meditate? Queſt.

Get a love to ſpiritual things. We uſually meditate on thoſe things which we love. The voluptuous man can muſe on his pleaſures: the covetous man on his bags of gold. Did we love heavenly things, we ſhould meditate more on them. Many ſay they cannot meditate, becauſe they want memory; but is it not rather becauſe they want affection? Did they love the things of God, they would make them their continual ſtudy and meditation. *Anſw.*

5. The fifth Duty wherein we are to offer violence to our ſelves, is *ſelf-examination*; a duty of great importance: it is a parlying with ones own heart, *Pſal.* 77. 7. *I commune with my own heart.* *David* did put interrogatories to himſelf. Self-examination is the ſetting 5. *Duty.*

up a Court in conſcience, and keeping a regiſter there, that by a ſtrict ſcrutiny a man may know how things ſtand between God and his own ſoul. Self-examination is a *ſpiritual inquiſition*; a bringing ones ſelf to trial. A good Chriſtian doth as it were begin the day of Judgement here in his own ſoul. Self-ſearching is an heart-anatomy. As a Chyrurgion, when he makes a diſſection in the body, diſcovers the *inteſtina*, the inward parts, the heart, liver, arteries: ſo a Chriſtian anatomizeth himſelf; he ſearcheth what is fleſh, and what is ſpirit; what is ſin, and what grace, *Pſal.* 77. 7. *My ſpirit made diligent ſearch*: As the woman in the Goſpel did light a candle and ſearch for her loſt groat, *Luk.* 15. 8. So conſcience *is the Candle of the Lord*, *Prov.* 20. 27. A Chriſtian by the light of this Candle muſt ſearch his ſoul if he can find any grace there. The Rule by which a Chriſtian muſt try himſelf, is the Word of God. Phancy and opinion are falſe Rules to go by. We muſt judge of our ſpiritual condition by the Canon of Scripture. This *David* calls a *Lamp unto his feet*, *Pſalm* 119. 105. Let the Word be the Umpire

Umpire to decide the controverſie whether we have grace or no. We judge of colours by the Sun. So we muſt judge of the eſtate of our ſouls by the light of Scripture.

Self-examination is a great duty incumbent *; it requires ſelf-excitation: it cannot poſſibly be done without offering violence to our ſelves.

* Lam. 3. 40. *Perſcrutemur vias.* Junius.

1. Becauſe the duty in it ſelf is difficult: 1. It is *actus reflexivus*, a work of ſelf-reflexion; it lies moſt with the heart. 'Tis hard to look inward. External acts of Religion are facil; to lift up the eye to Heaven, to bow the knee, to read a prayer; this requires no more labour than for a Papiſt to tell over his beads; but to examine a man's ſelf, to turn in upon his own ſoul, to take the heart as a watch all in pieces, and ſee what is defective; this is not eaſie. *Reflexive acts are hardeſt.* The eye can ſee every thing but it ſelf. It is eaſie to ſpy the faults of others, but hard to find out our own. 2. Examination of a man's ſelf is difficult, becauſe of ſelf-love. As ignorance blinds; ſo ſelf-love flatters. Every man is ready to think the beſt of himſelf. What *Solomon* ſaith of love to

to our neighbour, is moſt true of ſelf-love; it *hides a multitude of evil, Prov.* 10. 12. A man looking upon himſelf in *Philautiæ ſpeculo*, in the glaſs of ſelf-love, his virtues appear greater than they are, and his ſins leſſer. Self-love makes one rather excuſe what is amiſs, than examine it *.

* *Malumus vitium excuſare quam excutere.* Seneca.

2. As examination is in it ſelf difficult; ſo it is a work which we are very hardly brought to. That which cauſeth a backwardneſs to ſelf-examination, is

1. *Conſciouſneſs of guilt.* Sin clamours inwardly, and men are loth to look into their hearts, leſt they ſhould find that which ſhould trouble them. It is little pleaſure to read the *hand-writing* on the wall of conſcience. Many Chriſtians are like trades-men that are ſinking in their eſtates; they are loth to look over their Books, or caſt up their accounts, leſt they ſhould find their eſtates low: So they are loth to look into their guilty hearts, leſt they ſhould find ſomething there which ſhould affright them: as *Moſes* was affrighted at the ſight of the *Rod* turned into a Serpent.

2. Men are hardly brought to this duty,

duty, becauſe of fooliſh preſumptuous hopes: they phancy their eſtate to be good, and while they weigh themſelves in the ballance of preſumption, they paſs for currant. Many take their ſalvation on truſt. The fooliſh Virgins thought they had had Oyl in their lamps as well as the wiſe, *Mat.*25. Some are not *ſure* of their ſalvation, but *ſecure*. If one were to buy a piece of Land, he would not take it upon truſt, but examine the title. How confident are ſome of ſalvation, yet never examine their title to Heaven.

3. Men are not forward to examine themſelves; becauſe they reſt in the good opinion of others: how vain is this! Alas, one may be Gold and Pearl in the eye of others; yet God may judge him *Reprobate Silver*: others may think him a Saint; and God may write him down in his black-book. *Judas* was looked upon by the reſt of the Apoſtles, as a true Believer; they would have been ready to have given their hands to his certificate; yet he was a traitor. Standers by can but ſee the outward carriage; they cannot tell what evil is in the heart. Fair ſtreams may run on the

top

top of a River, but vermin may lye at the bottom.

4. Men are hardly brought to examine themſelves, becauſe they do not believe Scripture. The *Scripture* ſaith, The *heart is deceitfull* above all things, *Jer.* 17.9. *Solomon* ſaid there were four things too wonderfull for him that he could not know, *Prov.* 30.19. He might have added a fifth; *The way of man's heart.* The heart is the greateſt Impoſtor; it will be ready to put one off with ſeeming grace, inſtead of ſaving. The heart will perſwade that a ſlight tear is Repentance; a lazy deſire is Faith. Now becauſe the generality of people do not believe that there is ſuch fallacy in their hearts, therefore they are ſo ſlow to examine them. This natural backwardneſs in us to ſelf-reflection, ſhould cauſe us to offer the more violence to our ſelves in making a thorow diſquiſition and ſearch of our hearts.

Oh that I might prevail with Chriſtians, to take pains with themſelves in this great work of examination. Their ſalvation depends on it. It is the note of an Harlot; ſhe is ſeldom at home, *Prov.* 7.11, 12. *Her feet abide not*

not in her houſe; now is ſhe without, now in the ſtreets. It is a ſign of an Harlot-Profeſſor, to be altogether abroad, ſpying the faults of others; but is never at home with his own heart. Oh let us try our hearts, as we do Gold by the Touch-ſtone. Let us examine our *ſins*, and finding out this *leven*, burn it. Let us examine our *grace*, whether it be of the *right kind.* One went into the field to gather herbs, and he gathered *wild gourds*, and then *death was in the pot*, 2 *King.* 4. 40. So many think they have grace, the *right herb*; but it proves a *wild gourd*, and brings death and damnation. That we may offer violence to our ſelves in this great buſineſs of *Examination*, let theſe few things be ſeriouſly weighed.

1. Without ſelf-examination we can never know how it is with us. If we ſhould die preſently, we cannot tell to what Coaſt we ſhould ſail; whether to Hell or Heaven. It is reported of *Socrates*, when he was going out of the world, he had this ſpeech, *I am now to die, and the gods know whether I ſhall be happy or miſerable.* That man who is ignorant of the ſtate of his ſoul, muſt needs

needs have *the trembling at the heart* as *Cain* had a ſhaking in his fleſh. By a ſerious ſcrutiny of our hearts, we come to know to what Prince we belong, whether to *the Prince of Peace*, or *the Prince of the Air*.

2. If we will not try our ſelves, God will try us. He will examine us as the chief Captain did *Paul*, *by ſcourging*, *Acts* 22. 24. He will aſk that queſtion as Chriſt, *Whoſe image and ſuperſcription is this?* And if we cannot ſhew him his own image, he will reject us.

3. There is ſecret corruption within, which will never be found out but by ſearching *. There are in the heart (as *Auſtin* ſaith) *hidden pollutions* *. When *Pharaoh*'s Steward accuſed *Joſeph*'s Brethren of having the Cup; they durſt have ſworn they had not the Cup in their ſack. Little doth a man know what Atheiſm, Pride, Uncleanneſs is in his heart, till he ſearcheth.

* *Nec videmus fundum cordis noſtri, ubi ſecreta latent παραφαίλα.* Lap.
* *Plangendæ tenebræ.*

4. The great advantage which will accrew to us: the benefit is great which way ſoever things turn. If upon examination we find that we have not grace in

in truth, then the miſtake is diſcovered, and the danger prevented. If we find that we have grace, we may take the comfort of it. How glad was he that had *found the Pearl of great price?* He that upon ſearch finds that he hath but the *minimum quod ſic*, the leſt degree of grace, is like one that hath found his *box of evidences*; he is heir to all the Promiſes, and in a ſtate of ſalvation.

And that we may go on the more ſucceſſively in this work, let us deſire God to help us to find out our hearts, *Job* 34. 32. *That which I ſee not teach thou me.* Lord, take off the vail; ſhew me my heart; let me not periſh through miſtake, or go to Hell with hope of Heaven.* * *Plurimi ſpe periclitantur.* Aug.

6. *Duty.* The ſixth duty wherein we muſt offer violence to our ſelves, is, the *Religious ſanctifying of the Lords day.* That there ſhould be a day of holy reſt dedicated to God, appears from the inſtitution. *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.* Our Chriſtian Sabbath comes in the room of the Jewiſh Sabbath: it is called κυριακὴ ἡμέρα, *the Lords day*, *Rev.* 1. 10. from Chriſt the Author of it. Our Sabbath is altered by Chriſt's own appointment.

appointment. He aroſe this day out of the grave, and appeared on it often to his Diſciples, 1 *Cor.* 16. 1. To intimate to them (ſaith *Athanaſius*) that he transferred the Sabbath to the Lord's day. And St. *Auſtin* ſaith, that by Chriſt's riſing on the firſt day of the week, it was conſecrated to be the Chriſtian Sabbath in remembrance of his Reſurrection *. This day was antiently called *dies lucis*, *the day of light*; as *Junius* obſerves. The other daies of the week would be dark, were it not for the ſhining of the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* on this day. This day hath been called by the Antients, *Regina dierum*, *the Queen of daies*. And St. *Hierom* prefers this day above all ſolemn feſtivals. The Primitive Church had this day in high veneration: it was a great badge of their Religion: for when the queſtion was aſked, *Servaſti Dominicum? Keepeſt thou the Sabbath?* the anſwer was made, *Chriſtianus ſum*, I am a Chriſtian, and dare not omit the celebration of the Lords day. What great cauſe have we thankfully to remember this day! As the benefit of *Iſrael*'s deliverance

* *Dominicus dies Chriſti reſurrectione declaratus eſt Chriſtianis, & ex illo, cœpit habere feſtivitatem ſuam.*

rance from the *Babiloniſh* captivity was ſo great, that it drowned the remembrance of their deliverance from *Egypt*, *Jer.* 16. 14. So the benefit of our deliverance from Satan's captivity, and the riſing of Chriſt from finiſhing the glorious work of our Redemption was ſo famous, that in reſpect of his other benefits, receive, as it were, a diminution. Great was the work of Creation; but greater the work of Redemption. It coſt more to redeem us, than make us. In the one, there was only the ſpeaking a word; *Pſal.* 148. 5; in the other, the ſhedding of blood; *Heb.* 9. 22. The Creation was the work of God's *fingers*; *Pſal.* 8. 3. the Redemption, the work of his *arm*; *Luke* 1. 5. In the Creation God gave us *our ſelves*; in the Redemption he gave us *himſelf*. So that the Sabbath putting us in mind of our Redemption, ought to be obſerved with the higheſt devotion. Herein we muſt offer holy violence to our ſelves.

When this bleſſed day approacheth, we ſhould labour, that as the day is ſanctified; ſo our hearts may be ſanctified.

We muſt on this day *reſt from all the* 1.

works of our calling. As *Abraham* when he went to ſacrifice, left his Servant and Aſs at the bottom of the hill, *Gen.* 22.5. So when we are to worſhip God this day, we muſt leave all ſecular buſineſs behind. And as *Joſeph* when he would ſpeak with his Brehren, thruſt out the *Egyptians*: ſo when we would have converſe with God this day, we muſt thruſt out all earthly employments. Though works of *neceſſity* may be done, and works of *charity*, (for God will have mercy, and not ſacrifice) yet in other caſes we muſt ceaſe from all worldly negotiations. It is obſervable concerning *Mary Magdalen*, that ſhe refuſed to anoint Chriſt's dead body on the Sabbath day, *Luke* 23. 56. ſhe had before prepared her ointment, but came not to the Sepulchre till the Sabbath was paſt. She reſted that day from *civil work*, though it were a commendable and glorious work; the anointing of Chriſt's dead body.

2. When this bleſſed day approacheth, we muſt lift up our hearts in thankfulneſs to God, that he hath put another *price into our hands* for the gaining of heavenly wiſdom. Theſe are our ſpiritual

ritual harveſt-daies; now the wind of God's Spirit blows upon the ſails of our affections, and we may be much furthered on in our heavenly voyage. Chriſtian, lift up thy heart to God in thankfulneſs, that he hath given thee another golden ſeaſon, and be ſure thou improve it; it may be the laſt. Seaſons of grace are not like the *Tyde*; if a man miſſeth one tyde, he may have another.

This day approaching, we muſt in the morning dreſs and fit our ſouls for the receiving of the Word. The people of *Iſrael* muſt waſh their garments before the Law was delivered to them. Our hearts muſt be waſhed by prayer and repentance, the Oracles of God being to be delivered to us. 3.

And being met together, we muſt ſet our ſelves as in the preſence of God with ſeriouſneſs and delight to hear God's ſacred Word. Take heed of diſtractions which fly-blow our duties.

We muſt labour to be bettered by every Sabbath: where the Lord laies out coſt, he looks for fruit. Freſh anointings of God are to be thirſted after; and new cubits to be added to 4.

our ſpiritual *ſtature*. We muſt not be like the *Salamander*, which lives in the fire, but is never the hotter. Chriſtians ſhould on theſe daies aſpire after communion with God, and endeavour to have the illapſes of his Spirit, and clearer diſcoveries of his love in Chriſt. In ſhort, we ſhould do on a Sabbath as *Moſes*; he aſcended the *Mount* that he might have a ſight of God.

5. We muſt dedicate the whole day to God. Under the Law a ſingle Sacrifice was appointed for other daies of the week; but two Lambs were to be offered upon the Sabbath. All this day muſt be ſpent with God: he muſt have worſhip in the publick; and when we come home, he muſt have family-worſhip. Many leave all their Religion at Church (as I have ſeen ſome do their Bibles) not hallowing God's name in their own houſes, *Mal.* 3. 8. *Will a man rob God?* When men pretend to Worſhip God in the Temple, but cut him ſhort of family and cloſet-duties on a Sabbath; this is to rob God, and ſteal a part of his day from him.

Good reaſon we ſhould conſecrate the whole Sabbath to God, and give him

him *double devotion*, for God *doubles his bleſſings* upon us this day. As the *Manna* did rain twice as much on the ſixth day, as any of the other daies: ſo the *Manna* of ſpiritual bleſſings falls twice as much on the Sabbath day as any other.

We muſt rejoyce in this day, as being a day wherein we enjoy much of God's preſence, *John* 8. 56. *Abraham ſaw my day and rejoyced.* So when we ſee a Sabbath day coming, we ſhould rejoyce. The Proteſtants in *France* called their Church *Paradiſe*, becauſe there they met with God *. The *Jews* called the Sabbath, *deſiderium dierum, the deſire of daies, Iſa.* 58. 13. *Thou ſhalt call the Sabbath a delight.* This we ſhould look upon as the beſt day, as the *Queen of daies*, crowned with a bleſſing, *Pſal.* 118. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoyce and be glad in it.* He hath *made* all the daies, but hath *ſanctified* this. We ſhould look upon this day as a ſpiritual *Mart* for our ſouls, wherein we have holy commerce and traffick with God. This day of *Reſt* is the beginning of an eternal reſt. This day God ſets open the *Pool of Betheſda*, in which thoſe waters flow that refreſh

6.

* Sleidan.

the broken in heart. And ſhall not we call this day *a delight?* The Jews on the Sabbath laid aſide their Sackcloth and mourning.

This is in a right manner to ſanctifie a duty; and it is a duty wherein Chriſtians muſt excite and offer violence to themſelves.

Above all others, how well doth it become thoſe into whoſe hands God hath put the power of Magiſtracy to ſhew forth holy violence in cauſing the Lord's day to be ſtrictly obſerved? What a rare pattern hath *Nehemiah* ſet all good Magiſtrates, *Neh.* 13. 15. *In thoſe daies ſaw I in Judah ſome treading wine-preſſes on the Sabbath, and bringing in ſheaves, and all manner of burdens which they brought into Jeruſalem on the Sabbath day, and I teſtified againſt them in the day wherein they ſold victuals,* Verſ. 17. *Then I contended with the Nobles of Judah, and ſaid unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and prophane the Sabbath day?* How dare ye infringe the command, and make a falſe entry upon God's freehold? *My Lord,* your proclamation for the pious obſervation of the Sabbath, and your punitive acts upon ſome offenders,

offenders, have given a publick Teſtimony of your zeal for this day. The keeping up the honour of the Sabbath, will much keep up your magiſterial honour.

The ſeventh Duty wherein we muſt offer violence to our ſelves, is *holy conference:* and indeed we are backward enough to it, therefore had need herein provoke our ſelves, *Mal.* 3. 17. *They that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another.* A gracious perſon hath not only Religion in his *heart*, but in his *tongue*, *Pſal.* 37. 30. *The Law of God is in his heart, and his tongue talketh of Judgement:* he drops holy words as Pearls. 'Tis the fault of Chriſtians, that they do not in company provoke themſelves to ſet good diſcourſe on foot: it is a ſinful modeſty: there is much viſiting, but they do not give one anothers ſouls a viſit. In worldly things their tongue is *as the Pen of a ready Writer* *; but in matters of Religion, they are as if their tongue *did cleave to the roof of their mouth.* As we muſt anſwer to God for *idle words*; ſo for *ſinfull ſilence.* 7. *Duty.*

* *Verba ſolliis leviora.* Ovid.

Oh let us offer violence to our ſelves

in this, in ſetting abroach good diſcourſe! What ſhould our words dilate and expatiate upon but Heaven? The world is a great *Inne*; we are gueſts in this Inne. Travellers, when they are met in their *Inne*, do not ſpend all their time in ſpeaking about their *Inne*; they are to lodge there but a few hours, and they are gone; but they are ſpeaking of their home, and the Country whither they are travelling. So when we meet together, we ſhould not be talking only about the world; we are to leave this preſently; but we ſhould talk of our heavenly Country, *Heb.* 11. 16.

That we may provoke our ſelves to good diſcourſe (for it will not be done without ſome kind of violence) let theſe conſiderations be duly weighed.

1. The diſcourſe demonſtrates what the heart is *. As the Glaſs ſhews what the face is, whether it be fair or foul: ſo the words ſhew what the heart is. Vain ſpeeches diſcover a light feathery heart: gracious ſpeeches are the birth of a gracious heart. The water of the Conduit ſhews what the Spring is.

* *Verba ſunt nuncia cordis.* Bern.

2. Holy conference is very edifying.

The

The Apoſtle bids us *edifie one another*, *Epheſ.* 4. 29. And how more than this way? Good conference enlightens the mind when it is ignorant; warms it when it is frozen; ſettles it when it is wavering. A good life adorns Religion; good diſcourſe propagates it.

3. Gracious diſcourſe makes us reſemble Chriſt. His words were perfumed with holineſs: *grace was poured into his lips*, *Pſal.* 45. 2. He ſpake to the admiration of all: his hands wrought *miracles*, and his tongue ſpake *Oracles*, *Luke* 4. 22. *All bare him witneſs, and wondred at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* Chriſt never came into any company, but he ſet good diſcourſe on foot. *Levi* made him a feaſt, *Luke* 5. 29. and Chriſt feaſted him with holy diſcourſe. When he came to *Jacob*'s Well, he preſently ſpeaks of the *water of life*, *John* 4. The more holy our ſpeeches are, the more we are like Chriſt. Should not the members be like the head?

4. God takes ſpecial notice of every good word we ſpeak when we meet, *Mal.* 3. 16. *They that feared the Lord ſpake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a Book of Remembrance*

membrance was written before him: *Tamerlain* that Scythian Captain had alwaies a Book by him of the names and good deserts of his servants which he bountifully rewarded. As God hath a *bottle* for the tears of his people: so he hath a *Book* in which he writes down all their good speeches, and will make honourable mention of them at the last day.

5. Holy discourse will be a means to bring Christ into our company. The two Disciples were communing of the death and sufferings of Christ; and while they were speaking, Jesus Christ came among them, *Luke* 24. 15. *While they communed together, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.* When men entertain bad discourse, Satan draws near, and he makes one of the company; but when they have holy and gracious conference, Jesus Christ draws near, and where-ever he comes, he brings a blessing along with him. So much for the first, the offering violence to our selves.

2. 2. We must offer violence to *Satan*. Satan opposeth us both by open violence, and secret treachery. By open violence,

violence, ſo he is called the *Red Dragon*; by ſecret treachery, ſo he is called the *Old Serpent*. We read in Scripture of his *ſnares* and *darts*; he hurts more by his ſnares, than by his darts.

1. His *Violence*. He labours to ſtorm the caſtle of the heart: he ſtirs up to paſſion, luſt, revenge. Theſe are called βέλη πεπυρωμένα, *fiery darts*, *Epheſ.* 6. 16. becauſe they oft ſet the ſoul on fire. Satan in regard of his fierceneſs is called a Lion, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *Your adverſary the Devil as a roaring Lion walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour*. Not (ſaith *Chryſoſtom*) whom he may *bite*, but *devour* *.

* ἐ τινα δάκῃ ἢ κλάσῃ, &c.

2. His *Treachery*. What he cannot do by *force*, he will endeavour to do by *fraud*. Satan hath ſeveral νοήματα, ſubtil policies in tempting.

In ſuiting his temptations to the complexion and temper of the body. Satan ſtudies the phyſiognomy, and laies ſuitable baits. He knew *Achan*'s covetous humour, and tempted him with a wedge of gold. He tempts the ſanguine man with beauty. 1.

2. Another ſubtilty is to draw men to evil, *ſub ſpecie boni*, under a pretence of good. The Pirate doth miſchief by hanging

hanging out falſe colours: ſo doth Satan by hanging out the colours of Religion. He puts ſome men upon ſinful actions, and perſwades them much good will come of it. He tells them in ſome caſes they may diſpenſe with the Rule of the Word, and ſtretch their conſcience beyond that line that they may be in a capacity of doing more ſervice. As if God needed our ſin to raiſe his glory.

3. Satan tempts to ſin gradually. As the Huſbandman digs about the root of a tree, and by degrees looſens it, and at laſt it falls. Satan ſteals by degrees into the heart: he is at firſt more modeſt: He did not ſay to *Eve* at firſt, *Eat the Apple*; no, but he goes more ſubtilly to work; he puts forth a queſtion, *Hath God ſaid?* ſure *Eve* thou art miſtaken; the bountiful God never intended to debar thee one of the beſt trees of the Garden. *Hath God ſaid?* ſure, either God did not ſay it; or if he did, he never really intended it. Thus by degrees he wrought her to diſtruſt, and then ſhe took of the fruit and eat. Oh take heed of Satan's firſt motions to ſin, that ſeem more modeſt —— *principiis obſta*—

He

He is firſt a *Fox*, and then a *Lion*.

4. Satan tempts to evil *in licitis*, in lawful things. It was lawful for *Noah* to eat the fruit of the Grape; but he took too much, and ſo ſinn'd. Exceſs turns that which is good into evil. Eating and drinking may turn to intemperance. Induſtry in ones calling (when exceſſive) is covetouſneſs. Satan draws men to an immoderate love of the creature, and then makes them offend in that which they love. As *Agrippina* poiſoned her huſband *Claudius* in that meat he loved moſt.

5. Satan puts men upon doing good out of bad ends: if he cannot hurt them by *ſcandalous* actions, he will by *virtuous* actions. Thus he tempts ſome to eſpouſe Religion out of policy to get preferment, and to give alms for applauſe, that others may ſee their good works, and canonize them. This hypocriſie doth leven the duties of Religion, and make them loſe their reward.

6. The Devil perſwades to evil by ſuch as are good. This ſets a gloſs upon his temptations, and makes them leſs ſuſpected. The Devil hath made

uſe

uſe ſometimes of the eminenteſt and holieſt men to promote his temptations. The Devil tempted Chriſt by an Apoſtle. *Peter* diſſwades him from ſuffering. *Abraham* a good man bids his wife equivocate: *Say, Thou art my Siſter.* Theſe are his ſubtilties in tempting. Now here we muſt offer violence to Satan, 1. By faith, 1 *Pet.* 5. 9. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in faith* *. Faith is a wiſe intelligent grace; it can ſee an hook under the bait. 2. It is an Heroick grace; it is ſaid, ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, *above all*, to quench the fiery darts of Satan. Faith reſiſts the Devil.

* ᾧ ἀντίστητε.

1. As it doth keep the caſtle of the heart that it doth not yield. It is not the being tempted makes us guilty, but giving conſent. Faith enters its proteſt againſt Satan.

2. Faith not only not yields, but beats back the temptation *. Faith holds the promiſe in one hand, and Chriſt in the other: The promiſe encourageth faith, and Chriſt ſtrengthens it: ſo faith beats the enemy out of the field.

* ἄπρακτα αὐτῷ ἐπιστρέφων τὰ ὅπλα. Chryſ.

2. We muſt offer violence to Satan by prayer. We overcome him upon our knees. As *Sampſon* called to Heaven for help:

help: ſo a Chriſtian by prayer fetcheth in auxiliary forces from Heaven. *In all temptations go to God by prayer.* Lord teach me to uſe every piece of the ſpiritual armour; how to hold the ſhield, how to wear the helmet, how to uſe the ſword of the Spirit. Lord ſtrengthen me in the battel; let me rather die a Conquerour, than be taken priſoner, and led by Satan in triumph. Thus we muſt offer violence to Satan. There is *a Lion in the way*; but we muſt reſolve upon fighting.

And let this encourage us to offer violence to Satan. Our enemy is beaten in part already *. Chriſt who is *the Captain of our ſalvation* *, hath given Satan his deaths wound upon the Croſs, *Col.* 2. 15. The Serpent is ſooneſt killed in his head. Chriſt hath bruiſed the head of the *old Serpent.* The Devil is a chained enemy, and a conquered enemy; therefore fear not to give battel to him. *Reſiſt him, and he will fly*: he knows no march but running away.

* Heb. 2. 10. * ἀι δυνάμεις τῦ σατανᾶ καθαιρῦνται Ignat.

3. We muſt offer violence to the *world.* The world ſhews its *golden Apple*, it is a part of our vow in Baptiſm to fight under Chriſt's banner againſt the world.

world. Take heed of being drowned in the luſcious delights of it. It muſt be a ſtrong brain that bears heady wine. He had need have a great deal of wiſdom and grace, that knows how to bear a great eſtate. Riches oft ſend up their intoxicating fumes, which make mens heads giddy with pride. *Jeſurun waxed fat and kicked, Deut.* 32. 15. It is hard to climb up the hill of God with too many golden weights. Thoſe that want the *honours* of the world, want the *temptations* of it. The world is *blandus Dæmon*, a flattering enemy. It is given to ſome as *Michol* to *David*, for a ſnare. The world ſhews its two breaſts of *pleaſure* and *profit*, and many fall aſleep with the breaſt in their mouth. The world doth never kiſs us, but with an intent to betray us. It is a ſilken halter. The world is no friend to grace; it chokes our love to heavenly things: the earth puts out the fire. Naturally we love the world, *Job* 31. 24. *If I have made gold my hope*; the Septuagint renders it, *If I have been married to my gold* *. Too many are wedded to their mony; they live together as man and wife. Oh let us take heed

* εἰ ἔταξα εἰς χῦν. Si poſui aurum in in conjugium.

heed of being intangled in this pleaſing ſnare. Many who have ſcaped the Rock of ſcandalous ſins, yet have ſunk in the world's golden quick-ſands. The ſin is not in the *uſing* of the world, but in the *loving*, 1 *John* 2. 15. *Love not the world.* If we are Chriſtians, we muſt offer violence to the world. Believers are *called out of the world:* they are *in* the world, but not *of* it, *John* 17. 16. As we ſay of a dying man, he is not a man for this world. A true Saint is crucified in his affections to the world, *Gal.* 6. 14. He is dead to the honours and pleaſures of it. What delight doth a dead man take in pictures or muſick? Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf *to redeem us from this preſent evil world*, *Gal.* 1. 4. If we will be ſaved, we muſt offer violence to the world. Living fiſh ſwim againſt the ſtream. We muſt ſwim againſt the world, elſe we ſhall be carried down the ſtream, and fall into the *dead Sea.* That we may offer violence to the world, let us remember,

1. It is *deceitfull*; our Saviour calls it, ἀπάτη τοῦ πλούτου, *The deceitfulneſs of Riches*, *Matth.* 13. 22. The world promiſeth happineſs, but nothing leſs. It promiſeth

us *Rachel*, but puts us off with bleareyed *Leah*: it promiseth to satisfie our desires, but it encreaseth them: it gives poison'd Pills, but wraps them in Sugar.

2. It is *defiling*, *Jam.* 1. 17. *Pure Religion is to keep himself unspotted from the world.* As if the Apostle would intimate, that the world is good for nothing but to spot: it spots first mens consciences, and then their names. It is called αἰσχροκερδῆ *filthy lucre*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. because it makes men so filthy. They will damn themselves to get the world. *Ahab* would have *Naboth*'s Vineyard, though he swum to it in blood.

3. It is *perishing*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 17. *The fashion of the world passeth away.* The world is like a flower which withers while we are smelling to it.

4. Fourthly, We must offer violence to *Heaven.* The *Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence.* Though Heaven is given us freely, ye we must take pains for it. *Canaan* was given *Israel* freely, but they must fight with the *Canaanites.* It is not a lazy wish, or sleepy prayer will bring us to Heaven; we must offer violence. Therefore in Scripture our earnestness for Heaven is set out by those allegories

allegories and metaphors which imply violence.

1. Sometimes by ſtriving, *Luk.* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate.* The Greek word is ἀγωνίζεσθε, *Strive as in an Agony.*

2. Wreſtling, which is a violent exerciſe, *Epheſ.* 6. 12. We are to wreſtle with a body of ſin, and with the powers of Hell.

3. Running in a Race, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. *So run that ye may obtain.* We have a long Race from Earth to Heaven, and but a little time to run; it will ſoon be ſun-ſet. Therefore *ſo run.* In a Race there's not only laying aſide all weights that hinder; but a putting forth all the ſtrength of the body; a ſtraining every joynt that men may preſs on with all ſwiftneſs to lay hold on the prize. Thus Saint *Paul* preſſed κατὰ σκοπὸν, *towards the mark*, *Phil.* 3. 14. Alas, where is this holy violence to be found?

1. Many have made themſelves unfit to run this bleſſed Race; they are drunk with the pleaſures of the world. A drunken man is unfit to run a Race.

2. Others neglect to run this Race all their life; and when ſickneſs and

death approach, now they will begin. A ſick man is very unfit to walk, much leſs to run a Race. I acknowledge true Repentance is never too late; but when a man can hardly ſtir his hand, or lift up his eyes, now is a very unfit time to begin the Race from earth to Heaven.

4. This earneſtneſs for Heaven is compared to fighting, which implies violence, 1 *Tim.* 6. 12. *Fight the good fight of Faith.* It is not enough to be *labourers*, but *warriers.* Indeed in Heaven, our armour ſhall be hung up in token of victory; but now it is *dies prælii*, a day of battel; and we muſt *fight the good fight of Faith.* As *Hannibal* forced a way for his Army over the Alps and craggy Rocks: So muſt we force our way to Heaven *. We muſt not only pray, but pray fervently, *Jam.* 5.16. This is offering violence to Heaven.

* *Non eſt ad magna facilis aſcenſus.* Cyprian.

1. The Reaſons why there muſt be this offering violence to Heaven, are

1. God's indiſpenſible command. He hath enacted a Law, that whoſoever eats of the fruit of Paradiſe, ſhall eat it in the ſweat of his brows, 2 *Pet.* 1.10.

Give

Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure. The Greek word σπουδάσατε, imports an anxious ſolicitous care about ſalvation.

2. God's decree. The Lord hath in his eternal decree joyned the end and the means together; *ſtriving* and *entring*; the *Race* and the *Crown*. And a man can no more think to come to Heaven without offering violence, than he can think to come to the end of his Journey, that never ſets a ſtep in the way. Who expects an harveſt without plowing and ſowing? How can we expect the harveſt of glory without labour. Though our ſalvation in reſpect of *Chriſt* is a purchaſe; yet in reſpect of *us*, it is a conqueſt.

3. We muſt offer violence to Heaven in regard of the difficulty of the work; *Taking a Kingdom.* Firſt, we muſt be pulled out of another Kingdom, *The Kingdom of darkneſs**. To get out of the ſtate of nature is hard, and when that is done, and we are cut off from the wild Olive, and implanted into Chriſt, there is new work ſtill to do; new ſins to mortifie; new temptations to reſiſt; new graces to quicken. A Chriſtian

* Acts 26. 18.

muſt not only get Faith, but go *from Faith to Faith*, *Rom.* 1. 17. This will not be done without violence.

4. We muſt offer violence to Heaven, in regard of the violent aſſaults made againſt us.

1. Our own hearts oppoſe us. 'Tis a ſtrange Paradox: man who doth naturally deſire happineſs, yet oppoſeth it: he deſires to be ſaved, yet hates that holy violence which ſhould ſave him.

2. All the powers of Hell oppoſe us. Satan *ſtands at our right hand*, as he did at *Joſhua*'s, *Zach.* 3. 2. Shall not we be as earneſt to ſave our ſouls, as the *Dragon* is to devour them? Without violent affections, we ſhall never reſiſt violent temptations.

5. We muſt be violent, becauſe it is a matter of the higheſt importance. A man doth not beat his head about trifles, but matters wherein his life and eſtate are concerned. Violence is to be offered, if we conſider

1. What we ſhall ſave: *The precious ſoul.* What pains do we take for the feeding and enriching the body, *the brutiſh part*? O then what violence ſhould

ſhould we uſe for the ſaving the ſoul? The body is but a Ring of Clay, the ſoul is the Diamond. The ſoul is the glaſs wherein the image of God is ſeen*. There are in the ſoul ſome ſhadows and faint repreſentations of a Deity. If Chriſt thought the ſoul worth ſhedding his blood, well may we think it worth ſpending our ſweat. * Plato.

2. Conſider what we ſhall gain; a *Kingdom*. What violence is uſed for earthly Crowns and Empires; men will wade to the Crown through blood. Heaven is a Kingdom which ſhould make us ſtrive for it, * *Non ad ſudorem tantum ſed ſanguinem, even to blood.* The Hopes of a Kingdom (ſaith St. *Baſil*) ſhould carry a Chriſtian chearfully through all labours and ſufferings. * μὴ φύγης τὸν κάματον ἵνα τύχῃς τῦ στεφάνυ. Chryſoſt.

There muſt be offering violence in regard of that aptneſs and proneneſs in the beſt to grow remiſs in Religion. When they have been quickned in a duty, they are apt to grow dead again. When they have been heat at the fire of an Ordinance, they are apt to freeze again; therefore they muſt be ſtill offering violence. The heart, like the Watch, will be apt to go down; there- 6.

fore must be ever and anon wound up by prayer and meditation. The fire of devotion will soon go out, if it be not blown up. A Christian's own experience of his inconstancy in good, is cogent enough to holy violence.

Use 1. Inform. 1. Branch.

If there must be this offering violence; it shews us it is not so easie a thing as men imagine to get to Heaven. There are so many precepts to obey; so many promises to believe; so many Rocks to avoid, that it is a difficult matter to be saved *. Some phancy a fine easie way to Heaven, an idle wish, a death-bed tear; but the text tells us of *offering violence*. Alas, there is a great work to be done; *the biass of the heart is to be changed.* Man by nature doth not only *want* grace, but *hate* it. He hath an envenomed spirit against goodness, and is angry with converting grace; and is it easie to have the heart metamorphised? for the proud heart to be made humble; for the earthly heart to be made heavenly: can this be done without using violence? It is all up hill to Heaven, and it will make us sweat before we get to the top of the hill. Indeed Hell will be taken without storm:

* ὁμοὶ δύσκολον ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιτυχεῖν. Ignatius.

ſtorm: the gates of Hell, like that *Iron-gate*, *Acts* 12. 10. *open of their own accord:* but if we get to Heaven, we muſt force our way: we muſt beſiege it with ſighs and tears, and get the ſcaling-ladder of faith to ſtorm it. We muſt not only *work*, but *fight*. Like thoſe *Jews*, who built the wall of *Jeruſalem*, *Nehem.* 4. 17. *Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.* A Chriſtian is commanded upon hot ſervice; he muſt charge through the whole Army of his luſts, every one of which is ſtronger than *Goliah*. A Chriſtian hath no time to lye fallow; he muſt be either praying, or watching; either *upon the Mount*, or *in the Valley*; on the Mount of Faith, or in the Valley of Humility. Worldly things are not obtained without labour: what toiling in the ſhop? what ſweating in the furnace? and do we think Heaven will be had without labour? Do men dig for worms, and not for gold? Thoſe who are in Heaven are employed; much more ſhould they who are getting thither. The Angels are *miniſtring ſpirits*, *Heb.* 1. 14. The wings of the Seraphims

are

are hieroglyphical, and ſhew us how ſwift they are in God's ſervice. If the Angels in Heaven are buſying themſelves in noble and honourable imployment, how induſtrious ſhould we be who are getting up the hill of God, and have not yet arrived at a ſtate of glory? Is ſalvation-work ſo facil? can a man be ſaved *per ſaltum?* can he leap out of the Devil's arms into *Abraham's boſom?* Oh no, there muſt be offering violence. Some think free-grace will ſave them; but it muſt be in the uſe of means. *Watch and pray.* Others ſay, the promiſes will bring them to Heaven; but the promiſes of the word are not to be ſeparated from the precepts. The promiſe tells us of a *Crown*; but the precept ſaith, *So run*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. The promiſes are made to encourage faith, not to cheriſh ſloth. But ſay others, Chriſt hath died for ſinners; and ſo they leave him to do all for them, and they will do nothing. Then the text is out of date, and all the exhortations to *ſtriving*, and *fighting the good fight of Faith*, are in vain. Our ſalvation coſt Chriſt *blood*; it will coſt us *ſweat*. The boat may as well get to ſhore without rowing, as we can to Heaven

Heaven without offering violence.

2. It ſhews us the great miſtake of ignorant people, who think the bare doing of duties, though in never ſo ſlight ſuperficial a manner is enough. The text tells us of *offering violence.* 2. Branch.

1. In the buſineſs of *Prayer*: They think it is enough to mutter over a few words, though the heart be aſleep all the while: what offering of violence is here? Chriſt was *in an Agony* at prayer, *Luk.* 22. 44. Many when they pray are rather in a Lethargy than in an Agony. *Jacob* wreſtled with the Angel in prayer, *Gen.* 32. 24. The Incenſe was to be laid upon burning coals, *Levit.* 16. 22. *Incenſe* was a type of prayer, and the *Incenſe upon coals*, was a type of fervency in prayer. Few know what the ſpirit of prayer means; or what it is to have the affections boil over. When they are about the world they are all *Fire*; when they are at prayer they are all *Ice.*

2. In *Hearing of the Word*: Many people think it is enough to bring their bodies to the Aſſembly, but they never look to their hearts. They ſatisfie themſelves that they have been at Church, though they have not been with

with God there. Others go to a Sermon as to the Exchange to *hear news*; new notions that please their phancy, but do not attend to the word as about a matter of life and death. They do not go to meet with Christ in an Ordinance; to have the breathings of his Spirit, and the infusions of his Love. Alas, what little violence for Heaven is to be seen in most peoples worship? In all the Sacrifices of the Law there was fire. How can those duties be accepted, which have no fire in them; no offering of violence?

3. Branch. 3. If there must be this offering of violence to Heaven, then it shews us how dangerous moderation in Religion is. Violence and moderation are two different things. Indeed moderation in the things of the world is commendable. We should moderate our desires here; and *use the world as if we used it not* *. We may as *Jonathan*, dip the end of the Rod in honey, but not thrust it in too far: in this sense moderation is good: but moderation in matters of practical piety is sinful: it is contrary to offering violence. Moderation in the world's sense is for one not to be too zealous, not

* 1 Cor. 7. 31.

not to be too fierce for Heaven. Moderation is not to venture further in Religion than may ſtand with ſelf-preſervation. As the King of *Navarr* told *Beza*, *He would launch no further into the Sea, than he might be ſure to return ſafe to Land.* To keep on the warm ſide of the hedge, is a main Article in the Politicians Creed. Moderation in the world's ſenſe is neutrality. The moderate perſon hath found out a *medium* between ſtrictneſs and prophaneneſs; he is not for debauchery, nor yet for purity. It was the advice *Calvin* gave *Melanthon*, that he ſhould not ſo affect the name of moderate, that at laſt he loſt all his zeal. To be lukewarm in matters of Religion, is far from offering violence to Heaven, *Rev.* 3. 19. *Be zealous and repent.* If any ſhall aſk us why we are ſo violent, tell them, it is for a Kingdom. If they ſhall aſk us why we make ſuch haſte in the waies of Religion, tell them, we are running an heavenly Race, and a ſoftly moderate pace will never win the prize. Moderation hath made many loſe Heaven; they have not made haſte enough; they have come too late (like the fooliſh Virgins)

Pelago ſe non ita commiſſurus eſſet, quin quando libet, pedem referre poſſet.

Virgins) when the door hath been ſhut

1. Branch. *Uſe* 2. *Reproof.* Out of this text may draw forth ſeveral arrows of Reproof.

——*quibus eſt alto dulce ſopore frui*——
* Billii Anthol. Sacr.

1. It reproves ſloth-full Chriſtians *, who are *ſettled on their lees:* they make a lazy Profeſſion of Religion, but uſe no violence. They are like the *Lillies*, which *toil not, neither do they ſpin.* The *Snail* by reaſon of its ſlow motion, was reckoned among the unclean, *Levit.* 11. 30. St. *Auſtin* calls idleneſs *the burial of a man alive.* There are ſome faint velleities; oh that I had Heaven! but a man may deſire Veniſon, and want it, if he doth not hunt for it *, *Prov.* 13. 4. *The ſoul of the ſluggard wiſheth and hath nothing.*

* τὰ ἔυκολα δύσκολα ποιεῖ ἡ ῥαθυμία.

——*Neque mola, neque farina*——

Men could be content to have the Kingdom of Heaven; but they are loth to fight for it. They chuſe rather to go in a feather-bed to Hell, than to be carried to Heaven in a *fiery Chariot* of zeal and violence. How many ſleep away,

away, and play away their time; as if they were made like the *Leviathan*, to play in the Sea! *Pſal.* 104. 26. It is a ſpeech of *Seneca*, No man is made wiſe *by chance* *. Sure it is, no man is ſaved *by chance*, but he muſt know how he came by it, namely, *by offering violence*. Such as have accuſtomed themſelves to an idle lazy temper, will find it hard to ſhake off, *Cant.* 5. 3. *I have put off my Coat, how ſhall I put it on?* The Spouſe had laid her ſelf upon the bed of ſloth, and though Chriſt knocked at the door, ſhe was loth to riſe and let him in. Some pretend to be Believers, but are idle in the Vineyard. They pretend to make uſe of Faith for ſeeing, but not for working: this Faith is phancy. O that Chriſtians had a ſpirit of activity in them, 1 *Chron.* 22. 16. *Ariſe and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.* We may ſometimes learn of our enemy *. The Devil is never idle; he *walketh about*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. The world is his *Dioceſs*, and he is every day going his viſitation. Is Satan active? is the enemy upon his march coming againſt us? and are we aſleep upon our guard? As Satan himſelf is not idle; ſo he will not endure that

* *Nemo caſu fit ſapiens.* Sen.

* *Fas eſt & ab hoſte doceri.*

that any of his ſervants ſhould be idle. When the Devil had entred into *Judas*, how active was *Judas*! he goes to the High Prieſt, from thence to the band of Souldiers, and with them back to the Garden, and never left till he had betrayed Chriſt. Satan will not endure an idle ſervant; and do we think God will? How will Heathens riſe up in Judgement againſt ſlothful Chriſtians! What pains did they take in the Olympian games; they ran but for a Garland of flowers, and do we ſtand ſtill who run for a Crown of immortality? Certainly if only the violent take Heaven, the idle perſon will never come there. God puts no difference between theſe two, *ſlothful* and *wicked*, *Matth.* 25. 26. *Thou wicked and ſlothful ſervant.*

2. Branch. 2. It reproves the *Formaliſt*, who puts all his Religion in geſtures, and veſtures, emblems of devotion, and thinks this will entitle him to Heaven, *Rev.* 3. 1. *Thou haſt a name to live and art dead.* The form and outſide of Chriſtianity is judged neceſſary.

1. It is a means to keep up mens credit in the world. Should they be viſibly prophane, ſuch as are ſober would not come

come near them; they would be looked upon no better than baptized Heathens: therefore they muſt make a ſhew of devotion, out of policy to gain ſome repute and eſteem among others.

2. A form ſerves to ſtop the mouth of conſcience: had not they ſome kind of outward devotion, their conſcience would fly in their face, and they would be a *terrour to themſelves*: therefore they think it expedient to have *a form of Godlineſs*. But alas, what is all this? The Text ſpeaks of *offering violence to Heaven*. What violence is there in a form? Here is no taking pains with the heart; a *form*, but no *power*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. *. Formaliſts are like the *Tombs* in the Church, which have their eyes and hands lift up to Heaven, but no ſoul. The Formaliſts devotion runs out moſt in punctilioes, and niceties: he neglects *the weightier matters of the Law, Faith and Mercy*, *Matth.* 23. 23. He ſcruples ſuperſtitious phancies, but makes no reckoning of ſin: he is more afraid of an Hare croſſing his way, than of an Harlot in his bed. He hates ſanctity. Chriſt had no ſuch bitter enemies as the formal Phariſees. The

* *Significat* μόρφωσιν *inane pietatis ſimulachrum.* Beza.

formaliſt is never violent, but in perſecuting the power of godlineſs.

3. Branch. 3. It reproves ſuch as are violent in a *bad ſenſe:* they are violent for Hell; they go thither in the ſweat of their brows, *Jer.* 8. 6. *Every one turned to his courſe; as the horſe ruſheth into the battel.* A war-horſe ruſheth violently among the guns and pikes: ſo did they ruſh into ſin violently. Men are violent,

1. In oppoſing Good.
2. In purſuing Evil.

1. 1. *In oppoſing Good.* Several waies. 1. They offer violence to the Spirit of God. The Spirit knocks at the door of ſinners hearts; he waits till his head be *filled with dew*, and *his locks with the drops of the night*; but ſinners repulſe and grieve the Spirit, and ſend away this Dove from the Ark of their ſouls, *Acts* 7. 51. *Ye do alwaies reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt.* The Spirit offers grace to the *ſinner*, and the ſinner offers violence to the Spirit, *Iſa.* 63. 10. *They rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit*; and may not the Lord give over ſtriving. God who is willing to come in when we open to him, hath not promiſed to come again if we unkindly repulſe him.

2. They

2. They offer violence to conſcience. Conſcience is God's Preacher in the boſom; and this Preacher cannot flatter: it tells men of their pride, covetouſneſs, abuſe of mercy; but they inſtead of being violent againſt their ſins, offer violence to conſcience: they ſilence and impriſon conſcience. But as the Prophet *Zachary*, when he was dumb called for a table-book, and did write, *Luke* 1. 63. So when conſcience cannot be permitted to ſpeak, it will write: it writes down mens ſins; and when at death they ſhall be forced to read the hand-writing, it will make their hearts tremble, and their knees ſmite. This I fear is too common, for men to offer violence to their conſcience: and what will be the iſſue? They who will not hear the voice of conſcience, ſhall be ſure to feel the worm of conſcience.

3. They offer violence to God's image. The Saints (who are God's lively picture) are oppoſed and ſhot at. This is a curſed violence, *Gal.* 4. 29. *As he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him who was born after the Spirit; ſo it is now.* Chriſt himſelf is ſtricken at through Believers. The Church hath

been alwaies in the *Torrid zone*: The *Plowers have plowed upon her back.* The earth hath been ſown with the bodies of the Saints, and watered with their blood. Perſecutors I grant are of an antient Family. The firſt man that was born in the world was a perſecutor, namely *Cain*; and he hath had a numerous off-ſpring. *Nero, Trajan, Domitian, Diocleſian, Maximinus.* *Chryſoſtom* ſaith, that the apples of his eyes fell out. *Fælix* Earl of *Wartembourg* being at ſupper at *Auſpurg*, did take an oath, that before he died, he would ride up to the ſpurs in the blood of the *Lutherans*; but was afterwards choked in his own blood. Perſecutors are the curſe of the Creation; being ſome of thoſe *thorns and briars* which the earth brings forth.

2. 2. Men are violent in purſuing Evil.

1. They are violent in their *Opinions*, 2 *Pet.* 2.1. *Privily they ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, denying the Lord that bought them.* *Arrius* was ſuch an one; and afterwards his bowels guſhed out. And truly the ſpirit of *Arrius* is yet alive at this day, while men dare deny the Deity of the bleſſed Son of God. Many of the Hereticks of old were ſo violent, that

that their *Opinion* was to them a *Bible*: and some of them died in maintaining their heresies. These were the Devil's Martyrs.

2. They are violent in their *Passions* *. Anger is a short frenzy *, *Jam.* 3.6. *The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.* In this little member there is a great world, *viz.* a *world of sin*: such as would be counted sober, yet are drunk with passion. Their prayers are cold, but their anger hot. They spit fire as the Serpent doth poison. Fiery passions without Repentance, bring men to the fiery furnace.

* ὅλοι ὑπὸ τοῦ θύμου κατὰ κρημνῶν φέρονται.

* *Brevis insania.* Sen.

3. They are violent for their *lusts*, *Tit.* 3.3. *Serving divers lusts.* Lust is δύναμις ἐπιθυμετικὴ, an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the soul to the gratifying its carnal desires *. *Aristotle* calls them *brutish lusts*, because when lusts are violent, they will not let reason or conscience be heard; but a man is carried brutishly to the satisfying the flesh *.

* *Pravæ cupiditates sunt portæ inferi per quas ad mortem descendunt homines.* Austin.

* *Plurimi cupiditatibus se mancipant, etiam in humano corpore plantæ brutique vitam agunt; brutum num usquam in plantam degenerat? & num planta in lapidem? immò an ulla est quæ quantum potest, non emicet extra solum, seseque in auras attollat? denique, uno excepto homine, nunquid toto mundo occurrat, quod gradum suum, quod dignitatem non accuratè tueatur & retineat?* Mornæus.

1. Men are violent for their *drunken* luſts. Though death be in the cup, they will drink it off. One having almoſt loſt his eye-ſight, the Phyſician told him there was no cure for him, unleſs he would leave off his exceſſive drinking; then ſaith he, *Farewell ſweet light:* he would rather loſe his eye-ſight than leave his drinking.

* *Vale lumen amiſum.*

2. They are violent for their *unclean* luſts. Men are ſaid to *burn in luſts*, *Rom.* 1. 27. The Apoſtle intimateth that luſt is a kind of *feaver*. Feavouriſh heats are not more pernicious to the body, than luſt is to the ſoul. O what folly is it for a drop of pleaſure, to drink a Sea of wrath *.

* *O voluptates dum ſuadetis invegitus, ſed poſtea uſque ad mortem animæ pungitis.* Auſtin.

3. They are violent for their *oppreſſive* luſts: who wrong and defraud others, and by violence take away their right. Inſtead of cloathing the naked, they make them who are cloathed naked. Theſe birds of prey live upon rapine. They are cruel, as if with *Romulus* they had been ſuckled with the milk of Wolves. They ſmile at the curſes of the poor, and grow fat with their

their tears. They have forgotten Chriſt's *caveat*, *Luk.* 3. 14. *Do violence to no man.* *Ahab* violently took away *Naboth*'s Vineyard, 2 *King.* 21. 11. Hell is taken by this violence, *Prov.* 4. 17. *Who drink the Wine of violence.* This wine will turn to poiſon at laſt, *Pſal.* 11. 5. *Him that loveth violence God's ſoul hates.*

4. They are violent for their *covetous* luſts. Covetouſneſs is the ſoul's dropſy, *Amos* 7. 2. *Who pant after the duſt of the earth.* They compaſs Sea and Land to make mony their Proſelite *. Their god is made of gold, and to it they bow down. Thoſe who bowed down on their knees to drink of the waters, were accounted unfit ſouldiers for *Gideon*, *Judg.* 7. 6. So are thoſe unfit for Chriſt, that ſtoop immoderately to the love of earthly things. They who are violent for the world, what have they but the wind? *Eccleſ.* 5. 16. *What profit hath he who hath laboured for the wind?* The world cannot enrich the ſoul, it cannot remove pain. If pangs of conſcience come, the world can no more give comfort, than a Crown of Gold can cure the head-ach.

* *Magis aurum ſuſpicimt quam cœlum.* Minut. Oct.

4. It reproves them *who* have *in part* left

4. Branch.

left off that holy ſtrictneſs and violence in Religion as once they had. Their fervour is cooled and abated. What they do is ſo little, that it cannot be called violence. They ſerve God, but are not *fervent in ſpirit*. They do not leave off duty, but they grow dead in duty. They have *left their firſt love*, *Rev.* 2.4. * It is with them as fire when it is going out; or as the Sun when it is going down. Like aguiſh men, before they were in a Paroxiſm, or hot fit of zeal; but now the cold fit hath taken them; they are formal and frozen in Religion. Time was when they *called the Sabbath a delight*, *Iſa.* 58. 13. How were their hearts raiſed in duty! how diligently did they ſeek him *whom their ſoul loved*! but now the caſe is altered; their Religion doth languiſh, and even vaniſh. Time was when they were in an Agony, and did ſend forth *ſtrong cries* in prayer. Now the Chariot wheels are pulled off, and the ſpirit of prayer is much abated. Their prayers do even freeze between their lips; a clear ſign of the decay of grace. Theſe perſons are grown both lethargical and conſumptive.

* *Non omnino charitatem amiſiſſe, ſed multum de illius fervore remiſiſſe, inquit* Ribera.

1. *Lethargical*,

1. *Lethargical, Cant.* 5. 2. *I ſleep, but my heart wakes.* Though grace was alive in her, *her heart waked*; yet ſhe was in a dull drowſie temper, *I ſleep.* When the heart burns in ſin, and cools in duty, it is a ſure ſign of growing to a ſtupid lethargy.

2. *Conſumptive.* There are two ſigns of perſons in a ſpiritual conſumption.

1. When their deſire after Chriſt and Heaven is not ſo ſtrong as it was. A conſumptive man's ſtomach decaies. Chriſtians have not ſuch violent affections to heavenly things; they can deſire *Corn* and *Wine*, and the luſcious delights of the earth; but, Chriſt is leſs precious; they are not in pangs of deſire after him, a ſad ſymptom their grace is in a conſumption.

2. When they are not ſo vigorous in motion. A man that is livelſy and ſtiring at his work, it is a ſign he is in health; but when he is diſtleſs, and cares not to ſtir, or put his hand to any thing; a ſign nature is declining. So when men have no heart to that which is good, they care not to put themſelves upon the exerciſes of Religion; they have loſt a ſpirit of activity for God; they

they ſerve him in a faint ſickly manner; 'tis a ſign they are conſumptive.

When the pulſe can ſcarce be felt, it beats ſo low, men are near dying. So when thoſe who were once violent for Heaven, but now we can ſcarce perceive any good in them, the pulſe beats low, grace is *ready to dye*, *Rev.* 3. 2.* To you who have abated in your holy violence, and are grown remiſs in duty, let me expoſtulate with you, as the Lord did by the Prophet, *Jer.* 2. 5. *What iniquity have your Fathers found in me?* What evil have you found *in God*, that you leave off your former ſtrictneſs? Hath not God fed you with Manna from above, and given you his holy Spirit to be your guide and comforter? Hath he not made you ſwim in a Sea of mercy? What evil have you found in *Prayer*, that you are leſs violent in it? Have not you had ſweet intercourſe with God? Have not you ſometimes been melted and enlarged, inſomuch that you have thought your ſelves in the ſuburbs of Heaven when you have been upon this Mount? Hath not the Dove of prayer brought an Olive-branch of peace in its mouth? What evil

* ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν; *morti vicina.* Paræus.

evil have you found *in the Word?* Time was when you did take this book and *eat it*, and it was *hony in your mouth?* Hath the Word leſs virtue in it now? Are the Promiſes like *Aaron's dry Rod* withered and ſapleſs? What iniquity have you found *in the waies of God*, that you have abated your former violence in Religion? *O remember whence you are fallen and repent, and do your firſt works*, *Rev.* 2. 5. Conſider ſeriouſly,

1. The leſs violence for Heaven, the leſs peace. Our conſciences are never at peace in a drowſie ſtate. It is the lively acting of grace makes the heart calm and ſerene. Theſe two go together, walking *in the fear of God*, and *in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt*, *Acts* 9.31. Chriſtian, if once thou groweſt remiſs in Religion, conſcience will chide. If thou belongeſt to God, he will never let thee be quiet, but will ſend ſome affliction or other to awaken thee out of thy ſecurity, and make thee recover that active lively frame of heart as once thou hadſt.

2. You that grow more dead in God's ſervice, and *leave your firſt love*, give great advantage to Satan. The leſs violent

lent you are, the more violent he is; the leſs you pray, the more he tempts: and what a caſe are you now in? How can grace that is weak and ſickly withſtand violent temptations? Hence it is God ſuffers his own people ſometimes to fall into ſin, as a juſt puniſhment of their lukewarmneſs, and to make them more zealous and violent for the future.

3. Your remiſneſs in Religion, though it may not damn you, it will dammage you. You will loſe that degree of glory, which elſe you might have had. Though your remiſneſs may not loſe your Crown, it will leſſen it, and make it weigh lighter.

4. The more lazy a Chriſtian's deſires are, the more lively his corruptions. The weaker the body grows, the ſtronger the diſeaſe grows. Oh therefore pray for quickning grace, *Pſal.* 143. 11. Beg freſh gales of the Spirit to blow upon you. Never leave till you have recovered that holy violence which once you had.

2. Branch. Reproof. 2. It reproves thoſe who have quite left off all violence: they have left off reading and praying in their family. There is not ſo much as a face of Religion

Religion to be ſeen, they are fallen finally *. Such were *Joaſh*, *Jehu*, *Julian*. The goodly building of their profeſſion which others admired, now hath not one ſtone left upon another.

* *In quibus principium fervet, medium tepet, exitus alget, illos hypocritas fuiſſe patet, qui victoriæ coronam non conſequuntur.* Paræus.

But why do men thus run retrograde in their motion, and quite throw off that violence which they ſeem'd once to have.

1. Becauſe they never had a principle of ſpiritual life *. Things that move from a principle of life are conſtant, as the motion of the pulſe: but things artificial are apt to be at a ſtand, and their motion ceaſeth. As a clock when the weights are hung on goes, but take off the weights and it ſtands. So the Apoſtate never moved in Religion but for gain and applauſe; and when theſe weights are taken off, he is at a ſtand, he goes no further. That branch muſt needs wither that hath no root to grow upon.

* δεῖ τὸ ἐνδὸν ἔχειν.

2. Men throw off all violence, and degenerate into Apoſtaſie, becauſe they never did duties of Religion with delight. St. *Paul delighted in the Law of God in the inward man*, *Rom.* 7. 22. It was his

his Heaven to ſerve God. A man that delights in pleaſure will never give over: but the Apoſtate never had any true delight in the waies of God; he was rather forced with fear, than drawn with love: he ſerved a Maſter that he never cared for; no wonder then he leaves his ſervice.

3. Men degenerate into Apoſtaſie through unbelief, *Pſal.* 78. 22. *They believed not in God*, verſ. 41. *They turned back and tempted God.* Sinners have jealous thoughts of God, they diſtruſt his love, therefore deſert his ſervice: they think they may pray, and hear, and to no purpoſe, *Mal.* 3. 14. *What profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances?* We may draw near to God in duty, but he will never draw near to us in mercy. Thus Unbelief and Atheiſm prevailing, the livery of Religion is preſently thrown off, and all former violence for Heaven ceaſeth. Infidelity is the Mother of Apoſtaſie.

4. Men leave off their former violence, and prove *Judaſſes* and Devils becauſe they love ſomething elſe more than Religion. There is ſome luſt or other their heart is engaged to, and their

their violence for ſin hath deſtroyed their violence for Religion. *Solyman* the great Turk, ſeeing many Chriſtians go over to Turciſm, he aſked them what moved them to turn Turks? They replyed, *They did it to be eaſed of their Taxes.* They were drawn from God through the prevalency of covetouſneſs. If there be any luſt in the heart predominant, it will get head, and deſtroy all former zeal for Religion. *Abimeleck* a Baſtard deſtroyed *threeſcore and ten of his Brethren upon one ſtone, Judg.* 9. 50. If there be any luſt the heart runs after, this baſtard-ſin will deſtroy threeſcore and ten duties; it will murder all that violence for Heaven which a man did once ſeem to have.

5. Men leave off former violence out of puſillanimity: if they are violent in Religion, they fear they may loſe their profits and preferments; nay, their lives. The coward never yet won the field. When carnal fear grows violent, all violence for Heaven is at an end.

—Incipit eſſe malus, qui timet eſſe bonus—

Many of the *Jews* who were great followers

lowers of Christ, when they *saw the swords and staves*, left him, *Prov.* 29. 25. *In the fear of man there is a snare.* Carnal fear makes sin appear less than it is, but danger greater.

6. Men leave off violence for Heaven for want of patience. Sensible feeling of joy is with-held, and they have not patience to stay for the full recompence of reward. Hypocrites are all for *present pay*; and if they have not that suddenly which they desire, they bid adieu to Religion; and say as that wicked King, 2 *King.* 6. 33. *Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?* They consider not that God is a *free Agent*, and will dispense his blessings in the fittest season, but they go to tye God up to their time. They forget that joy is a part of the reward, and would they have the reward and their work not yet finished? Doth the servant use to receive his pay before his work is done, *Jam.* 5. 7. *The Husbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth:* he doth not look to sow and reap in a day. But Hypocrites are alwaies in haste; they would reap joy, before they have done sowing the seed of Repentance: and because comfort

is

is a while deferred, they are offended; they will ſerve God no longer: their patience is at an end, therefore their violence is at an end.

7. Men leave off holy violence, and degenerate into prophaneneſs, out of a juſt judgement of God, leaving them to themſelves; they oft reſiſted the Spirit, and ſent it away ſad from them, and now as a juſt judgement, God ſaith, *My Spirit ſhall no longer ſtrive*; and if this wind doth not blow upon their ſails, they cannot move. If this Sun withdraw from their climate, they muſt needs freeze in impenitency. They before ſinned againſt clear convictions; they ſilenced conſcience, and God hath ſeared it. And now if an Angel ſhould preach to them from Heaven, it would do them no good. O how diſmal is this! the thoughts of it may ſtrike us into an holy conſternation. Thus we ſee why men apoſtatize and leave off their violence for Heaven.

Well, but what do they get by this? let us ſee what a purchaſe Apoſtates make.

They proclaim their folly; for all their former violence for Heaven is 1.

loſt. He who runs half the race, and then faints, loſeth the Garland, *Ezek.* 18. 24. *When the righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, all his righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned.* All mens prayers and tears are loſt. The Apoſtate unravels all that he hath been doing. He is like a man that with a penſil draws a curious picture, and then comes with his ſpunge and wipes it out again, *Gal.* 3. 4. *Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain?* Perhaps for Religion a man hath ſuffered many a reproach and affront; and have ye ſuffered all this in vain? Here is folly indeed.

2. It will be bitterneſs in the end, *Jer.* 2. 19. *Know therefore that it is an evil and bitter thing that thou haſt forſaken the Lord.* Men by leaving off their violence for Heaven, get a thorn in their conſcience, a blot in their name, a curſe in their ſouls. What got *Judas* by his Apoſtaſie but an halter? So that it will be *bitterneſs in the end.* The Apoſtate when he dies drops as a windfall into the Devil's mouth.

5. Branch. 5. It reproves thoſe who put off this violence for the Kingdom till *old age.* When they are fit for no other work,

work, then they will begin this. No man ſaith, I will learn my trade when I am old. It is imprudence for one to begin to work for Heaven, when he is *paſt his labour*. There is a night of ſickneſs and death coming, and our Saviour ſaith, *The night cometh when none can work*, *Joh.* 9. 4. Sure a man can put forth but little violence for Heaven when old age, and old ſins are upon him. Beſides, how unworthy and diſingenuous is it, to give the Devil the flower of youth! and God the dregs of old age! Therefore God rejected *Cain*'s Sacrifice, becauſe it was ſtale before he brought it, *Gen.* 4. 3. There is little hope of their ſalvation, who are never violent for Heaven, till their diſeaſe grows violent.

6. It reproves thoſe that are ſo far from uſing this violence for Heaven, that they deride it. Theſe are your zealous ones, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. *In the laſt daies there ſhall be ſcoffers.* Holy walking is become the object of deriſion, *Pſal.* 69. 12. *I am become the ſong of the drunkards.* This ſhews a vile heart. There are ſome, who though they have no goodneſs themſelves, yet honour 6. Branch.

them that are good. *Herod* reverenced *John Baptiſt*. But what Devils are they who ſcoff at goodneſs, and reproach others for doing that which God commands. This age produceth ſuch as ſit in *the chair of ſcorners*, and throw their ſquibs at Religion. In *Bohemia*, when ſome of the Martyrs were the next day to ſuffer, they comforted themſelves with this, that this was their laſt Supper, and to morrow they ſhould feaſt with Chriſt in Heaven; a Papiſt ſtanding by, aſked them in a jeer, if Chriſt had any Cooks in Heaven to dreſs their Supper? Oh take heed of ſuch an *Iſhmael*-ſpirit! It is a ſign of a man given over to the Devil. God *ſcorneth the ſcorner*, *Prov.* 3. 34. And ſure he ſhall never live with God, whoſe company God ſcorns.

7. Branch. 7. It reproves them who inſtead of taking Heaven by force, keep it off by force; as if they were afraid of being happy; or as if a Crown of glory would hurt them. Such are

1. The *ignorant*, who ſhut their eyes againſt the light, and refuſe to be taught the way to Heaven, *Hoſea* 4. 6. *Thou haſt rejected Knowledge.* The Hebrew word,

word * signifies, to reject with disdain. As I have read of a *Scotch* Bishop, who *thanked God he never knew what the Old and New Testament was* *. I wonder where that Bishop took his text.

* מאס

* Act. & Monum.

2. The *prophane*, who hate to be admonished, and had rather die than reform, *Amos* 5. 10. *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate.* These keep off Heaven by force. Such were those, *Acts* 13. 46. *Seeing you put away the Word from you.* The Greek word may be rendred, *seeing* you shuff it away with your shoulders. As if a sick man should bolt out the Physician, lest he should cure him, *Job* 21. 14. *Who say unto the Almighty depart from us.* God is loth to be gone; he wooes and beseecheth sinners to accept of terms of mercy; he is loth to be gone, but sinners will have him gone; *They say to him, depart.* May not we say to these, *quis effascinavit? who hath bewitched you?* What madness beyond Hyperbole is this, that you should not only forsake mercy, but fight against it; as if there were danger in going to Heaven. These who put away salvation from them, are *felo de se*, they do wilfully perish; they would not

ἀπωθεῖσθε.

hear of any thing that ſhould ſave them. Were it not a ſad Epitaph to be written upon a man's Tomb-ſtone, Here lies one that murdered himſelf? This is the condition of deſperate ſinners, they keep off Heaven by force; they are ſelf-murderers. Therefore God writes their Epitaph upon their grave, *Hoſea* 13. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf.*

Uſe 3. Examination.

3. Let us then examine whether we put forth this holy violence for Heaven? What is an empty Profeſſion without this? like a Lamp without Oyl. Let us all aſk our ſelves, what violence do we uſe for Heaven?

1. Do we ſtrive with our hearts to get them into an holy frame? How did *David* awaken all the powers of his ſoul to ſerve God, *Pſal.* 57. 8. *I my ſelf will awake early.* The heart is like a Bell that is a long while a raiſing.

2. Do we ſet time apart to call our ſelves to account, and try our evidences for Heaven, *Pſal.* 77. 6. *My Spirit made diligent ſearch.* Do we take our hearts as a Watch all in pieces, to ſee what is amiſs and mend it. Are we curiouſly inquiſitive into the ſtate of our ſouls?

ſouls? Are we afraid of painted grace, as of painted happineſs?

3. Do we uſe violence in prayer? Is there fire in our ſacrifice? Doth the wind of the Spirit filling our ſails, cauſe *groans unutterable? Rom.* 8. 26. Do we pray in the morning as if we were to die at night?

4. Do we thirſt for the living God? Are our ſouls big with holy deſires, *Pſal.* 73. 25. *There is none upon earth my ſoul deſires beſides thee.* Do we deſire holineſs as well as Heaven? Do we deſire as much to look like Chriſt, as to live with Chriſt? Is our deſire conſtant? Is this ſpiritual pulſe ever beating?

5. Are we ſkilled in ſelf-denial? Can we deny our eaſe, our aims, our intereſt? Can we croſs our own will to fulfill God's? Can we behead our beloved ſin? to pluck out *the right eye* requires violence.

6. Are we lovers of God? it is not how much we *do*, but how much we *love*. Doth love command the caſtle of our hearts? Doth Chriſt's beauty and ſweetneſs *conſtrain us?* 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. Do we love God more than we fear Hell?

7. Do we keep our ſpiritual watch? do we ſet ſpies in every place, watching our thoughts, our eyes, our tongues? When we have prayed againſt ſin, do we watch againſt temptation? The Jews having ſealed the ſtone of Chriſt's Sepulchre, *ſet a watch*, *Matth.* 27.66. After we have been at the Word, or Sacrament (that ſealing Ordinance) do we ſet a watch?

8. Do we preſs after further degrees of ſanctity? *Phil.* 3. 13. *Reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before* *. A good Chriſtian is a wonder; he is the moſt contented, yet the leaſt ſatisfied; he is contented with a little of the world, but not ſatisfied with a little grace; he would ſtill have more Faith, and be *anointed with freſh Oyl*. *Paul* deſired to *attain unto the reſurrection of the dead*, *Phil.* 3.11. that is, he endeavoured (if poſſible) to arrive at ſuch a meaſure of grace as the Saints ſhall have at the Reſurrection.

* τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν.

9. Is there an holy emulation in us? do we labour to out-ſhine others in Religion? To be more eminent for love and good works?

Homer. Il. Ἀλλ' ὁ μ' ἀνὴρ ἀθέλων θεὸς πάντων ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

Do

Do we ſomething which is ſingular? *Matth.* 5. 47. *What do you more than others* *?

* περισσὸν, *idem valet quod* πλέον. Beza.

10. Are we got above the world? though we walk on Earth, do we trade in Heaven? Can we ſay as *David*, *Pſal.* 139. 17. *I am ſtill with thee.* This requires violence; for motions upward are uſually violent.

11. Do we ſet our ſelves alwaies under God's eye? *Pſal.* 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord alwaies before me.* Do we live *ſoberly* and *godly*, remembring whatever we are doing, our Judge looks on.

If it be thus with us, we are happy perſons. This is the holy violence the text ſpeaks of, and is the right way of taking the Kingdom of God. And ſurely never did *Noah* ſo willingly put forth his hand to receive the Dove into the Ark, as Jeſus Chriſt will put forth his hand to receive us into Heaven.

4. It exhorts all Chriſtians to this holy violence for Heaven. But before I preſs the exhortation, let me remove ſome Objections that may be made againſt this bleſſed violence. Uſe 4. Exhortation.

1. But we have no power of our ſelves *Object.* 1.

ſelves to ſave our ſelves? you bid us be violent, as if you ſhould bid a man tied faſt in fetters to walk.

Anſw. 'Tis true, we cannot till grace come, effectually operate to our own ſalvation. Before converſion we are purely paſſive; and when God bids us convert and turn, this is to ſhew us what we *ought* to do, not what we *can* do. Yet let us do *quoad poſſe*, what we are able.

1. We have power to avoid thoſe Rocks, which will certainly ruine our ſouls; I mean, *groſs ſins*. A man needs not be in bad company; he needs not ſwear, or tell a lye; nor would he do it if it were by Law death to ſwear an Oath.

2. We have power to put our ſelves upon the uſe of means, praying, reading, holy conference; this will condemn men at the laſt day; they do not act ſo vigorouſly in their ſphere as they might; they do not uſe the means, and try whether God will give grace. God will come with that ſilencing queſtion at laſt, *Why didſt not thou put my mony to the Exchangers? Matth.* 25. 17. Why didſt not thou improve that power I gave thee? 2. Though

2. Though we have not power to ſave our ſelves, yet we muſt purſue after ſalvation, becauſe God hath made a promiſe *of grace*, as well as *to grace*. He hath promiſed to *circumciſe our hearts*; to put *his Spirit within us*; to *inable* us to walk in his ſtatutes, *Ezek.* 36. 27. So that by prayer we are to put the bond in ſuit, and to preſs God with his own promiſe. Though I will not ſay with the *Arminians*, upon our endeavour God is bound to give grace; yet he is not wanting to them that ſeek his grace: * Nay, he denies his grace to none but them that wilfully refuſe it, *Pſal.* 81. 11. *Iſrael would none of me.*

* *Deus volentibus non deeſt.*

2. But this offering violence is hard, & I ſhall never be able to go thorow it. *Object.* 2.

Admit it be hard, yet it is a duty, and there is no diſputing duty. God hath made the way to Heaven hard. *Reſp.* 1.

To try our Obedience. A child obeys his Father, though he command him hard things. *Peter*'s obedience and love was tryed when Chriſt bade him come to him upon the water. 1.

God doth it that he may raiſe the price of heavenly things. Were the Kingdom of glory eaſily obtained, we ſhould 2.

ſhould not have valued it to its worth. Such is our nature, that we ſlight things which are eaſily come by. If Pearls were common, they would ſoon fall in their price. If Chriſt and Heaven might be had without violence, theſe bleſſings of the firſt magnitude would not have been had in ſuch high veneration.

But let not the difficulty be objected. What though ſalvation-work be hard.

1. Is it not harder to lye in Hell? is not ſuffering vengeance worſe than offering violence?

2. We do not argue ſo in other things. An eſtate is hard to come by, therefore we will ſit ſtill: No, difficulty doth the more whet and ſharpen our indeavour; and if we take ſuch pains for theſe inferiour things, how ſhould we for that which is more noble and ſublime! the profit will abundantly countervail the labour.

3. Though the buſineſs of Religion at firſt ſeems hard, yet when once we are entred into it, it is pleaſant. When the wheels of the ſoul are oiled with grace, now a Chriſtian moves in Religion with facility & delight, *Rom.* 7.22.

I delight

I delight in the Law of God in the inward man. Chriſt's yoak at the firſt putting on ſeems heavy; but when once it is on, it is eaſie. To ſerve God, to love God, to enjoy God, is the ſweeteſt freedom in the world. The Poets ſay, the top of *Olympus* is alwaies quiet *. The firſt climbing up the rocky hill of Heaven is hard to fleſh and blood; but when we are gotten up towards the top, there is peace and delight; we ſee a pleaſant proſpect, and are ready to cry out as *Peter* on the Mount of transfiguration, *It is good to be here.* What *hidden Manna* do we now find! this is the anticipation or foretaſt of glory.

* *Olympi cacumen ſemper quietum.*

3. But if I put my ſelf upon this violent exerciſe in Religion, then I ſhall loſe that pleaſure I have in my ſin, my mirth and melody, and I ſhall exchange delight for labour; and ſo I ſhall be no more *Naomi*, but *Marah.* Voluptuous perſons ſpeak as the Fig-tree in the Parable, *Judg.* 9. Shall *I leave my fatneſs and ſweetneſs*, all my former pleaſures, and now offer violence to Heaven, live a ſtrict mortified life? this croſſeth the ſtream of corrupt nature. *Object.* 3.

Leave the pleaſure in ſin. The Scripture *Anſw.* 1.

pture doth ſo deſcribe ſin, that one would think there ſhould be little pleaſure in it. The Scripture calls it,

1. Ὀφείλημα, a *debt*. Sin is compared to a debt of *ten thouſand talents*, *Matth.* 18. 24. A talent of gold among the *Hebrews*, was valued at almoſt four thouſand pounds. Ten thouſand talents is a figurative ſpeech, to expreſs how great a debt ſin is; and do you call this a pleaſure? is it any pleaſure for a man to be in debt?

2. The Scripture calls ſin a *diſeaſe*, *Iſa.* 1. 5. *The whole head is ſick.* Is it any pleaſure to be ſick? Though all do not feel this ſickneſs, yet the leſs the diſtemper is felt, the more mortal.

3. The Scripture compares ſin to *Gall and Wormwood*, *Deut.* 29. 18. It breeds a bitter worm in the conſcience. What a worm did *Spira* feel? Sin ſtings a man with wrath, *Joh.* 3. 34. And do you call this a pleaſure? ſure you *put bitter for ſweet*, *Iſa.* 5. 20.

2. The pleaſures of ſin do gratifie only the ſenſitive part of man, not the rational. Pleaſures are called *carnal*, becauſe they delight only the body. How abſurd was that ſpeech of the rich man in

In the Goſpel, when he was ſpeaking of his ſtore of goods, and his barns being full, *Soul, take thine eaſe, Luke* 12. 19. He might have ſaid more properly, *Body take thine eaſe*; for his ſoul was never the better for his riches, nor could it feel any delight in them. Though his barns were full, his ſoul was empty. Therefore when Satan tells thee, if thou uſeſt violence for Heaven, thou wilt loſe all thy pleaſures: aſk him, what pleaſures are they Satan? ſuch as pleaſe only the *ſenſes*, they do not delight the mind; they do not comfort the conſcience; they are ſuch delights wherein the bruit creatures do exceed me.

3. Theſe ſugred pleaſures in ſin the Scripture ſaith are but πρόσκαιρα, *for a ſeaſon*, *Heb.* 11. 25. like fire in ſtraw which makes a blaze, but is preſently out, 1 *Joh.* 2.17. *The world paſſeth away, and the luſts thereof.* It paſſeth away ſwiftly as a ſhip under ſail. Worldly pleaſures *periſh in the uſing*; like a flying ſhadow, or flaſh of lightning; and are theſe to be preferred before an *eternal weight of glory?*

4. The preſent ſweetneſs which is in ſin will turn to bitterneſs at laſt. Like the

the Book the Prophet eat, *Ezek.* 3. 3. *Sweet* in the mouth, but *bitter* in the belly. Hony is ſweet, but it turns to cholar. Sin is a *ſweet poiſon* *, it delights the pallat, but torments the bowels. When once the ſinner's eyes come to be opened at death, and he feels ſome ſparks of God's wrath in his conſcience, then he will cry out for horrour, and be ready to lay violent hands upon himſelf. We may ſay of the pleaſures of ſin, as *Solomon* of wine, *Prov.* 23. 32. *Look not on the wine when it is red, when it ſhews its colour in the glaſs, afterwards it bites like a Serpent* *. So look not on the ſmiling pleaſures of ſin; be not delighted with its beauty, but affrighted with its ſting *? Do the damned in Hell feel any pleaſure now in their ſins? Hath their *cup of wrath* one drop of hony in it? Oh remember, after the *golden Crowns*, and *womens hair*, come the Lion's teeth, *Rev.* 9. 8. Thus I have anſwered the firſt part of the Objection; I ſhall loſe all my pleaſures in ſin.

* *Dulce venenum.* Bern.

* ἁι γὰρ ἡδοναὶ δημίων δεινότεροι.

* τὶ βαρὺ δεσμωτήριον οἰκῆσαι, τὶ πάσχειν κακῶς, ἓν λυπερὸν ἁμαρτία ἓν φοβερὸν. Chr. Epiſt.

2. If I put forth this violence in Religion, I ſhall exchange my delight for labour.

labour. I must dig a way through the Rock, and while I work I must weep.

Resp. Though you must use violence, yet it is a sweet violence; it is a labour turned into delight, *Psal.* 138. 5. *They shall sing in the waies of the Lord.* To send out faith as a spy to view the heavenly *Canaan*, and pluck a bunch of Grapes there; what delight is here? *Rom.* 15. 13. *Joy in believing.* To love God (in whom all excellencies are combined) how sweet is it. To love beauty is delightful. To walk among the promises as among beds of spices, and taste the fruit, oh how pleasant! The labour of a Christian brings peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

——*Sed juvat ipse labor*——

And whereas it is said that this holy violence takes away our joy, and while we work we must weep; I answer, a Christian would not be without these tears. The tears of a Saint (saith *Bernard*) have more true joy in them, than all worldly delights. The *Oyl of joy* is for mourners, *Isa.* 61. 3.

4. I would use this violence for *Obj.* 4.

Heaven, but I ſhall expoſe my ſelf to the cenſure and ſcorn of others. They will wonder to ſee me ſo altered, and think it nothing but a religious phrenſie.

Reſp. 1. Conſider who reproach thee; they are the wicked * ; ſuch as if Chriſt were alive on earth, would reproach him. They are blinded by the God of the world, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. It is as if a blind man ſhould reproach a beautiful face.

* Μέμνησο δὲ, ὅτι ἐὰν μὲν ἐμμένῃς τοῖς ἐυτοῖς ὁι καταγελῶντες σῦ πρότερον, ὗτοι σὶ ὕστερον θαυμάσουσιν. Epict.

2. What do they reproach thee for? 'tis for offering violence to Heaven. Is it a diſgrace to be labouring for a Kingdom? Tell them thou art doing the work that God hath ſet thee about. Better they ſhould reproach thee for working in the Vineyard, than God damn thee for not working.

3. Jeſus Chriſt was reproached for thy ſake, *Heb.* 12. 2. *He endured the ſhame of the Croſs*; and wilt not thou be contented to bear reproaches for him? Theſe are but the chips of the Croſs, which are rather to be deſpiſed than laid to heart.

Obj. 5. If I uſe this holy violence, and turn religious, then I ſhall loſe ſuch yearly profits

profits which my ſin hath brought in. As *Amaziah* ſaid, *What ſhall I do for the hundred Talents?* 2 *Chron.* 25. 9.

Is there any profit in ſin? did ever any one thrive upon that trade? by that time you have caſt up the reckoning you will find but little profit. *Reſp.* 1.

1. By the incomes that ſin brings in, thou treaſureſt up vengeance, *Rom.* 2. 5. While thou putteſt unjuſt gain in the bag, God puts wrath in his viol; and will you call this profit?

Ἔργων ἀντ' ἀδίκων χαλεπὴν ἐπέθηκεν ἀμοιβήν. * Heſiod.

Whatever mony a man gets in a ſinful way, he muſt pay intereſt for it in hell.

2. That cannot be for thy profit, which makes thee come off a loſer at laſt. Thou loſeſt Heaven and thy ſoul; and what can countervail this loſs? *What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Matth.* 16. 26. God (ſaith *Chryſoſtom*) hath given a man two eyes; if he loſe one, he hath another; but he hath but one ſoul, and if that be loſt, he is undone for ever.

But I have ſo much buſineſs in the *Obj.* 6.

world, that I can find no time for this holy violence. As the King of *Macedon* ſaid, when they preſented him with a book treating of *Happineſs*, ὐ σχολάζω, *I am not at leiſure.*

Reſp. 1. See the folly of this objection, what is the main buſineſs of life, but looking after the ſoul? and for men to ſay they are ſo immerſed in the world, that they cannot mind their ſouls, is moſt abſurd and irrational. This is to make the greater give way to the leſſer. As if an Huſbandman ſhould ſay, he is ſo buſie in angling, or looking after his Bees, that he hath no time to plow or ſow. What is his occupation but plowing? Such a madneſs is it to hear men ſay, they are ſo taken up about the world, that they have no time for their ſouls.

Reſp. 2. Could God find time to think of thy ſalvation? could Jeſus Chriſt find time to come into the world, and be here above thirty years in carrying on this great deſign of thy Redemption, and canſt thou find no time to look after it? Is the getting a little mony that which obſtructs this violence for Heaven? *Thy mony periſh with thee.*

Reſp. 3. Canſt thou find time for thy body? time

time to eat and ſleep? and not find time for thy ſoul? canſt thou find time to employ about thy recreation? and no time to employ about thy ſalvation? canſt thou find time for idle viſits? and no time to viſit the Throne of Grace?

Oh take heed thou goeſt not to Hell in the croud of worldly buſineſs. *Joſhua*, who was a Commander of an Army, yet his work as a Souldier was not to hinder his work as a Chriſtian: he muſt pray as well as fight; and take the Book of the Law in his hand, as well as the Sword, *Joſh.* 1. 8.

Thou, whoſoever thou art that makeſt this Objection about worldly buſineſs, let me aſk thee, doſt thou think in thy conſcience that this will be a good excuſe at the laſt day, when God ſhall aſk thee, why didſt thou not take pains for Heaven? thou ſhalt ſay, Lord, I was ſo ſteeped in worldly buſineſs, that I was hindered. Were it a good plea for a ſervant to ſay to his Maſter, he was ſo drunk that he could not work? Truly, 'tis much like thine, to ſay, thou wert ſo drunk with the cares of the world, that thou couldeſt not be violent for the Kingdom.

Having anſwered theſe Objections, let me reaſſume the exhortation, preſſing all Chriſtians to this violence for the heavenly Kingdom. As *David*'s three Worthies ventured their lives, and brake thorow the hoaſt of the *Philiſtims* for water, 2 *Sam.* 23. 16. Such a kind of violence muſt we uſe, breaking through all dangers for obtaining the *water of life.*

Motive 1. 1. Conſider the deplorable condition we are in by nature; a ſtate of miſery and damnation; therefore what violence ſhould we uſe to get out of it! Were one plunged into quickſands, would he not uſe violence to get out? Sin is a quickſand, and is it not wiſdom to extricate our ſelves out? *David* being encompaſſed with enemies, ſaid, *His ſoul was among Lions*, *Pſal.* 57. 4. 'Tis true in a ſpiritual ſenſe, our ſoul is among Lions. Every ſin is a Lion that would devour us, and if we are in the Lion's Den, ſhall we not uſe violence to get out? The Angels uſed violence to *Lot*; they laid hold on him, and pulled him out of *Sodom*, *Gen.* 19. 16. Such violence muſt be uſed to get out of the ſpiritual *Sodom.* It is no ſafety to ſtay

ſtay in the enemies quarters.

2. It is poſſible that in the uſe of means we may arrive at happineſs. Impoſſibility deſtroies endeavour: but here is a *door of hope* opened. The thing is feaſible. It is not with us as with the damned in Hell; there is a tomb-ſtone rolled over them. But while we are under the ſound of *Aaron's Bell*, and the Silver Trumpet of the Goſpel is blown in our ears, while the Spirit of Grace breathes on us, and we are on this ſide the grave; there is great hope that by holy violence we may win Paradiſe. An abſolute impoſſibility of ſalvation is only for them who have ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and cannot repent, but who theſe are is a ſecret ſealed up in God's Book: elſe here is a great encouragement to all to be ſerious and earneſt in the matters of eternity, becauſe they are yet in a capacity of mercy, no final ſentence is already paſſed; God hath not yet taken up the drawbridge of mercy. Though the gate of Paradiſe is *ſtrait*, yet it is not ſhut. This ſhould be as Oyl to the wheels, to make us lively and active in the buſineſs of ſalvation. Therefore as the Huſband- Motive 2.

man *plows in hope*, *James* 5. ſo we ſhould pray in hope; do all our work for Heaven in hope; for the white flag of mercy is yet held forth. So long as there was Corn to be had in *Egypt*, the Sons of *Jacob* would not ſit ſtarving at home, *Gen.* 42. 3. So there is a Kingdom to be obtained; therefore let us not ſit ſtarveing in our ſins any longer.

3. Motive. This violence for Heaven is the grand buſineſs of our lives: what did we come into the world for elſe? we did not come hither only to eat and drink, and wear fine cloaths; but the end of our living is, to be violent for the Kingdom of glory. Should the body only be tended, this were to trim the ſcabbard, and let the blade ruſt: to preſerve the lumber, and let the child be burnt. God ſends us into the world as a Merchant ſends his Factor to trade for him beyond the Seas. So God ſends us hither to follow a ſpiritual trade, to ſerve him and ſave our ſouls. If we ſpend all our time *aut aliud agendo*, *aut nihil*, in dreſſing and pampering our bodies, or idle viſits, we ſhall give but a ſad account to God, when he ſhall ſend us a letter of ſummons by death, and

and bid us *give an account of our Stewardſhip.* Were not he much to be blamed that ſhould have a great deal of Timber given him to build him an houſe, and he ſhould cut out all this brave Timber into chips? Juſt ſo is the caſe of many; God gives them precious time in which they are to provide for a Kingdom, and they waſte this time of life, and cut it out all into chips. Let this excite violence in the things of God; it is the main errand of our living here; ſhall we go out of the world and forget our errand?

4. How violent are the wicked in waies of ſin! violent for their malicious luſts, *Prov.* 1. 16. *Their feet run to evil* *. Violent for their unclean luſts. *Amnon* offered violence to his Siſter; he would have his luſt, though it coſt him his life. Sinners tire out themſelves in the Devil's drudgery, *Jer.* 9. 5. *They weary themſelves to commit iniquity.* They are out of breath with ſin, yet not out of love with ſin, *Jer.* 50. 38. *They are mad upon their Idols.* So violent were the *Jews*, that they would ſpare no coſt in their

4. Motive.

* *Quod utroque pede ruuntur, notatur & feſtinatio & impetus.* Cartwr.

their Idolatrous worſhip, *Iſa.* 46. 6. *They laviſh gold out of the bag.* So fiercely were they bent upon Idolatry, that they would ſacrifice their Sons and Daughters to their Idol gods, *Jer.* 32. 35. *They built the high places of Baal to cauſe their Sons and Daughters to paſs thorow the fire.* Were men thus violent for their luſts and Idols; and ſhall not we be violent for a Kingdom? Nay, you that are now ingrafted into Chriſt, how violent perhaps have ſome of you been formerly in evil? how did you once ſpend your ſelves in a ſinful way! like *Paul*, who before his converſion *breathed out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the Diſciples of the Lord*, *Act.* 9. 1. Perhaps you have been violent in drawing others to ſin, you have been tempters to them; and perhaps ſome of them whom you have ſeduced to ſin, are now crying out of you in Hell, and ſaying, They had never come there if it had not been for your example; ſhould not the conſideration of this humble you? ſhould not this make you the more violent in Religion, that you may bring ſome glory to God before you die? ſhould not you be as induſtrious to ſave ſouls,

ſouls, as you have been to damn them? Were you to live to the age of *Methuſalem*, you could never do God ſervice ſufficient for the diſhonour you have done to him.

5. This holy violence hath much delight mingled with it, *Prov.* 3. 17. *All her waies are pleaſantneſs.* Though the way of Religion hath thorns in it (in reſpect of perſecution) yet it is full of Roſes, in reſpect of that inward peace and content that the ſoul finds in it. A man is violent at his recreation; but there is an inward delight he takes in it which ſweetens that violence. St. *Paul* made Religion his recreation, *Rom.* 7. 22. *I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.* In the Greek συνήδομαι, *I take pleaſure*; not only Heaven it ſelf is delightful, but the way thither. What raviſhing delight hath a gracious ſoul in prayer! *Iſa.* 56. 7. *I will make them joyful in the houſe of prayer.* What delight in holy contemplation! A Chriſtian hath ſuch illapſes of the Spirit, and meets with ſuch transfigurations of ſoul, that he thinks himſelf half in Heaven. Serving of God is like gathering of Spices, or Flowers, wherein there is ſome

5. Motive.

ſome labour, but the labour is recompenſed with delight. The way of ſin hath bitterneſs in it. The Bears while they lick the honey, are ſtung with the Bees. So while men are following their luſts, they have checks of conſcience, which are a foretaſt of Hell. Better want the honey, than have this ſting. But the violence for Heaven is ſpiced with ſuch joy, that it is not labour, but pleaſure.

6. Motive. 6. This violence and activity of Spirit in Religion, puts a luſtre upon a Chriſtian. The more excellent any thing is, the more active. The Sun is a glorious creature, as a Gyant *it runs its Race*, *Pſal.* 19. 5. Fire, the nobleſt element, ſparkles vigorouſly. The Angels are deſcribed with wings, *Iſa.* 6. 2. which is an emblem of their ſwift obedience. The more violent we are in Religion, the more Angelical we are.

7. Motive. 7. How violent was Chriſt about our ſalvation! he was in an Agony; he *continued all night in prayer*, *Luke* 6. 12. He wept, he faſted, he died a violent death; he roſe violently out of the grave. Was Chriſt ſo violent for our ſalvation, and doth it not become us to be

be violent, who are ſo nearly concerned in it? Chriſt's violence was not only ſatisfactory, but exemplary. It was not only to appeaſe God, but to teach us. Chriſt was violent in dying, to teach us to be violent in believing.

8. This holy violence brings Reſt *; motion tends to reſt, *Heb.* 4.9. *There remaineth a reſt for the people of God.* Indeed, there is a motion which doth not tend to reſt: they who are violent in a way of ſin, ſhall never have reſt, *Revel.* 4. 8. *They reſt not day and night.* Such as are graceleſs, ſhall be reſtleſs. But the violence a Chriſtian takes, leads to reſt. As the weary Traveller ſits down at night and reſts him, *Pſal.* 116. 7. *Return to thy reſt O my ſoul.* Holy violence is like the flying of *Noah*'s Dove to the Ark, where it found reſt.

8. Motive.
* *Omnis Motus tendit ad quietem.*

9. If we uſe what violence we are able, God will help us, *Phil.* 2. 12. *It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do.* The Spirit helps us in prayer, and ſo proportionably in all other duties of Religion, *Rom.* 8. 26. The Promiſe encourageth, and the Spirit enableth. In all earthly Races a man runs in his own ſtrength; but in the Race to Heaven we

9. Motive.

we have the Spirit of God helping us; he not only gives us the Crown, when we have done running; but he gives us legs to run; he gives exciting and aſſiſting grace; the Spirit of God helping, makes our work eaſie. If another helps to carry a burden, it is leſs difficult: If the Loadſtone draw the Iron, it is not hard for the Iron to move. If the Spirit of God, as a divine Loadſtone, draw and move the heart in obedience; now the work goes on with more facility.

10. Motive 10. This bleſſed violence in Religion, would be preventive of much ſin. While men are idle in the Vineyard, they are a prey to every temptation. We do not ſow our ſeed in fallow ground; but Satan doth ſow moſt of his ſeed of temptation in hearts that lye fallow. When he ſees perſons unimployed, he will find them work to do; he will ſtir them up to one ſin or other, *Matth.* 13. 25. *While men ſlept, the enemy ſowed tares.* When Satan finds men in a drowſie condition, their ſleeping time is his tempting time; but by holy violence we prevent the Devil's deſign; we are ſo buſied about ſalvation, that we have no leiſure to liſten to a temptation

tion. St. *Hierom* gave his friend this advice, to be alwaies well employed, that when Satan came with a temptation he might find him working in the Vineyard. When the Bird is flying it is safe, when it sits still on the bough, then it is in danger of being shot. When a Christian sits still, and is unactive, now the Devil shoots him with his *fiery darts*.

11. The folly of such as are violent for the world, but not for the Kingdom above. Alas, how insipid are all these things that we lay out our sweat and violence upon, they will not make us happy. King *Solomon* did as it were put all the creatures into a limbeck, and still out the quintessence of them, and *behold all was vanity*, *Eccles.* 2. 8. 11. Motive

1. These earthly things that we so toil for, are *uncertain*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. 'Tis uncertain whether we shall get them. All that are Suitors to a Virgin do not speed. All that come to a Lottery have not a prize.

2. They are *unsatisfactory*. Could men heap up silver as dust; had they as much as the Devil promised Christ, *All the Kingdoms of the world, and the glory*

glory of them; yet they can no more fill the heart, than a drop of water can fill the ciſtern, *Eccleſ.* 5. 16. *What profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?*

3. They are *tranſient*; death feeds at the root. All worldly poſſeſſions are like a Caſtle of Snow in the Sun: or like a poſie of flowers which withers while we are ſmelling to it. O what folly is it to put forth all ones violence for the world, which is but *for a ſeaſon*, and not for Chriſt and grace. As if a condemned man ſhould be earneſt to get his dinner, but never mind getting his pardon.

12. Motive. * μὴ τὸν πόνον ἴδῃς, ἀλλὰ τὸν μισθὸν, Chryſoſt.

12. The next motive is in the text; this violence is for a Kingdom *. The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence. And what will we be violent for, if not for a Kingdom? Men will wade to a Kingdom through blood: This is a Kingdom worth ſtriving for. *Cyprus* is an Iſland ſo exceeding fertile and pleaſant, that it was antiently called *Macaria*, which ſignifies *bleſſed*. This title of *Bleſſed* may more fitly be given to the heavenly Kingdom. If the Mountains were gold; if every Sand of the Sea were a Diamond; if the whole Globe

Globe were a ſhining Chryſolite, it were infinitely beneath the glory of this Kingdom.

1. The immunities of the heavenly Kingdom are great. 1.

1. There ſhal be a freedom from *ſin*; here ſin keeps houſe with us; it is as natural to us to ſin, as to breath. The ſoul that is moſt refined, and clarified by grace, is not without ſome dregs of corruption. St. *Paul* cried out of a *body of ſin*. He who is inoculated into Chriſt hath ſtill a taſte and relliſh of the wild Olive. But when we aſcend to the heavenly Kingdom, this mantle of ſin ſhall drop off. That Kingdom is ſo pure, that it will not mix with any corruption, *Rev.* 21. 27. A ſinful thought ſhall not creep in there. There is beauty which is not ſtained with luſt, and honour which is not ſwelled with pride.

2. In that bleſſed Kingdom there ſhall be freedom from the aſſaults of the *Red Dragon*. 'Tis ſad to have Satan daily ſoliciting us by his temptations, and labouring to trappan us into ſin. Temptation is the Devil's Powder-plot, to blow up the fort-royal of our grace;

but this is the bleſſed freedom of the heavenly Kingdom, it is not capable of temptation. The *old Serpent* is caſt out of Paradiſe.

3. In that bleſſed Kingdom there ſhall be freedom from diviſions. In this world God's *own Tribes* go to war. *Ephraim* envies *Judah*, and *Judah* vexeth *Ephraim*. The Souldiers Spear pierced Chriſt's ſide; but the diviſions of Saints pierce his heart. Chriſt prayed that all his people might be one, as he and his Father are one, *Joh.* 17. 21. But how do Chriſtians by their diſcords and animoſities go about what in them lies to fruſtrate Chriſt's Prayer. But in the Kingdom of Heaven there is *perfect love*, which as it caſts out *fear*, ſo *ſtrife*. Thoſe Chriſtians that could not live quietly together *here*, in that Kingdom ſhall be united. There *Calvin* and *Luther* are agreed. In that cœleſtial Kingdom there ſhall be no vilifying or ſlandering one another, or raking into thoſe ſores which Chriſt died to heal. Chriſtians that could not pray together, ſhall ſing together in that glorious quire: there ſhall not be one jarring ſtring in the Saints muſick.

4. In

4. In that heavenly Kingdom there ſhall be freedom from all moleſtations. Our lives now are interlined with troubles, *Pſal.* 31. 10. *My life is ſpent with grief, and my years with ſighing* *. There are many things to occaſion diſquiet: Sometimes poverty afflicts; ſometimes ſickneſs tortures; ſometimes unkindneſs of friends breaks the heart. Our lives, like the *Iriſh Seas*, are full of tempeſts; but in the Kingdom of Heaven is nothing to adminiſter grief; there all is ſerene and calm; nothing within to humble, or without to moleſt.

* ἀληθῶς ἐ βίῳ, ἀλλὰ σύμφορα. Euripides.

2. The Royalties and excellencies of that Kingdom are great. We may ſay of Heaven, as it was ſaid of *Laiſh*, *Judg.* 18. 9, 10. *We have ſeen the Land, and behold it is very good; a place where there is no want of any thing.* 2.

The heavenly Kingdom abounds with Riches, *Rev.* 21. 21. *The twelve Gates were twelve Pearls.* Earthly Kingdoms are fain to traffique abroad for Gold and Spices: In the Kingdom of God are all Rarities to be had, all commodities of its *own growth*; therefore figured by the *Tree of life*, bearing ſeveral ſorts 1.

of fruit, *Rev.* 22. 2. How rich is that place where the bleſſed Deity ſhines forth in its immenſe glory infinitely beyond the comprehenſion of Angels.

2. The delights of the heavenly Kingdom are unmixed. The comforts here below are checkered. Honour may be ſtained with diſgrace; joy interlarded with ſorrow. Our ſtars are mixed with clouds; but the delicacies of Heaven are *pure* as well as *pleaſant*. There is hony that hath not one drop of gall. The Chryſtal ſpring of joy hath no ſettling of ſorrow at bottom. The Roſe in that Paradiſe is without prickles; the Sun in that horizon is without eccliſpe.

3. This Kingdom above is *durable*,

——— οὐκ ὄισθε πέρας ———

Suppoſe earthly Kingdoms to be more glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of Saphire, yet they are corruptible, *Hoſ.* 1. 4. *I will cauſe the Kingdom to ceaſe. Troy* and *Athens* now lye buried in their own ruines. But the Kingdom of Glory, as it is made *without hands*; ſo *without end*. It is *the everlaſting*

laſting Kingdom, 2 *Pet.* 1. 11. Now methinks, if ever we will uſe violence, it ſhould be for this Kingdom; this Kingdom will make amends for all our labour and pains *. *Cæſar* marching with his Army towards *Rome*, and hearing that all the people were fled from it, ſaid, they that will not fight for this City, what City will they fight for! So if we will not put forth violence for this Kingdom of Heaven, what will we be violent * for! I ſay to all, as the children of *Dan* in another ſenſe, *Judges* 18. 9. *We have ſeen the Land, and behold it is very good; and are ye ſtill? Be not ſlothfull to go, and to enter to poſſeſs the Land.*

* ὁ ἀειστὸς ὐ τὰ τραύματα μόνον, ἀλλὰ ϗ τὰ τρόπαια ἀναλογισάμενος ἐπὶ τὴν ἀειστίαν ἔρχεται. Chryſoſt. Serm. in Eutropium.

Ὁ ἔμπορος φέρει τὰ κύμαλα, ἵνα ἔυρῃ τὰ χρήματα.

* *Currite Chriſtiani, velociſſimè currite, ut aurcolam, ſplendidiſſimum ſcilicet gloriæ bravium reportetis.* Lap.

13. The more violence we have uſed for Heaven, the ſweeter Heaven will be when we come there. As when a man hath been grafting Trees, or ſeting Flowers in his garden, it is pleaſant to review and look over his labours: So in Heaven, when we ſhall remember 13. Motive.

our former zeal and activity for the Kingdom; it will indulcorate Heaven, and add to the joy of it. For a Christian to think, such a day I spent in examining my heart, such a day I was weeping for sin; when others were at their sport, I was at my prayers; and now, have I lost any thing by this violence? My tears are wiped away, and the wine of Paradise chears my heart. I now enjoy him *whom my soul loves*; I now have the Crown and white Robes I so longed for. O how pleasant will it be to think, this is the Heaven my Saviour bled for, and I swet for.

14 Motive. 14. The more violence we put forth in Religion, the greater measure of glory we shall have. That there are degrees of glory in Heaven, seems to me beyond dispute.

1. There are degrees of torment in Hell *; therefore by the Rule of contraries degrees of glory in Heaven.

* Mat. 23. 14.

2. The Scripture speaks of a *Prophet's Reward*, *Mat.* 10. 41. which is a degree above others.

3. The Saints are said to shine *as the Stars*, *Dan.* 12. Now one star differeth from another in glory. So that there are

are gradations of happineſs; and of this judgement is *Calvin*; as alſo many of the antient Fathers. Conſider then ſeriouſly, the more violent we are for Heaven, and the more work we do for God, the greater will be our reward. The hotter our zeal, the brighter our Crown. Could we hear the bleſſed ſouls departed ſpeaking to us from Heaven, ſure thus they would ſay, were we to leave Heaven a while, and to dwell on the earth again, we would do God a thouſand times more ſervice than ever we have done; we would pray with more life, act with more zeal; for now we ſee, the more hath been our labour, the more aſtoniſhing is our joy, and the more flouriſhing our Crown.

15. Upon our violence for the Kingdom, God hath promiſed mercy, *Mat.* 7. 7. *Ask and it ſhall be given you; ſeek and ye ſhall find; knock and it ſhall be opened to you.* 15 Motive.

1. *Ask.*] Aſk with importunity. A faint asking begs a denial *. King *Ahaſhuerus* ſtood with his golden Scepter, and ſaid to Queen *Eſther*, *Ask and it ſhall be given to half of the Kingdom.* But God ſaith more, Aſk and he will give the

* *Qui frigide rogat, &c.*

whole Kingdom, *Luke* 12. 32. It is observable, the door of the tabernacle was not of brass, but had a thin covering, *a vail*, that they might easily enter into it: So the door of Heaven is through Christ's blood made easie, that our prayers put up in fervency may enter. Upon our asking, God hath promised to give his Spirit, *Luk.* 11. 13. And if he give his Spirit, he will give the Kingdom: the Spirit first anoints, 1 *John* 2. 27. and after its anointing Oil comes the Crown.

2. *Seek and ye shall find.*] But, is it not said, *Many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able?* *Luke* 13. 24. I answer, that is, because they did seek in a wrong manner.

1. They did seek *ignorantly*, setting up an Altar *to an unknown god*. It is ill seeking Pearls in the dark. Ignorant people seek Heaven by their good meanings; they seek in the dark, and no wonder they miss of salvation.

2. They did seek *proudly*. They sought Heaven by their own merits; whereas we are to seek the Kingdom in Christ's *strength*, and in his *name*.

3. They did seek *lazily*; as the Spouse sought

ſought Chriſt *on her bed*, and found him not, *Cant.* 3. 1. So many ſeek Chriſt in a ſupine manner; they *ſeek*, but they do not *ſtrive*.

4. They did ſeek *hypocritically*; they would have Heaven and their luſts too. Like that Proteſtant Prince *Cambden* ſpeaks of, who ſet up one Altar in the ſame Church to the true God, and another to the Idol. But let not ſuch ſeekers ever think to find happineſs; let not them think to lye in *Dalilah's lap*, and go to *Abraham's boſom* when they die.

5. They did ſeek *inconſtantly*: Becauſe mercy did not come preſently, they gave over ſeeking.

But elſe if we ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven cordially, God hath pawned his Truth in a Promiſe, we ſhall find, *Jer.* 29. 13. *Then ſhall ye find me, when you ſearch for me with all your heart.*

3. *Knock and it ſhall be opened.*] Knocking implies *violence*. But we muſt do as *Peter*, *Acts* 22. 16. *He continued knocking*. We muſt continue knocking by prayer, and Heaven-gate ſhall be opened. How may this be as Oil to the wheels? how may it excite holy violence, when we have ſo gracious a promiſe

miſe of mercy upon our earneſt ſeeking of it.

16. Motive. 16. This holy violence will not hinder men in their ſecular employments. Violence for the Kingdom, and diligence in a calling, are not inconſiſtent. Chriſtians, you may work for Heaven, yet work in a trade. God hath given you a body and a ſoul, and he hath allotted you time to provide for both: he hath given you a *body*, therefore be diligent in your calling; he hath given you a *ſoul*, therefore be violent for Heaven. Theſe two may well ſtand together, providing for a family, and praying in in a family. He that doth not exerciſe himſelf in ſome honeſt employment, is guilty of the breach of that Commandment, *Six daies ſhalt thou labour.* God never ſealed warrants for idleneſs*. The ſluggard ſhall be indicted at the day of judgement for letting his *field be over-run with thorns* *. They are hypocrites who talk of living by faith, but refuſe to live in a calling. Only remember, that the pains you take in Religion muſt exceed the other, *Mat. 6. 33. Seek ye firſt the*

* *Incumbit omnibus ut laborent.* Quiſtorp. *vid.* Ambros. *lib. 6. Hexam. cap. 4.* Virgilium *lib. 4. Æneid.* Horatium *Satyr. 1.* Plinium, *lib. 11. c. 30, &c.*

* Prov. 24. 30.

the Kingdom of God. First, in order of *time*, before all things; and first in order of *affection*, above all things. Your ſoul is the nobler part, therefore that muſt be chiefly looked after. In your calling ſhew diligence; in Religion violence.

But ſome may ſay, we are ſo incumbred in the world, that all time for Religion is ſwallowed up; we cannot get leave from our calling to read or pray?

Reſp. If your trade be ſuch that you cannot allow your ſelves time for your ſouls, then your trade is unlawful. There are two things make a trade unlawful,

1. When perſons deal in ſuch commodities as they know cannot be uſed without ſin. Selling of *black ſpots*, or idolatrous Pictures and Crucifixes.

2. When their trade doth ſo involve them in worldly buſineſs, that they cannot mind eternity, or make out one ſally to the Throne of Grace. They are ſo much in the ſhop, that they cannot be in the cloſet. If there be ſuch a trade to be found, doubtleſs it is unlawful; but let not men lay it upon their trade, but upon themſelves; their trade would give

give them leave to serve God, but their covetousness will not give them leave. O how many put a fallacy upon their own souls, and cheat themselves into Hell.

17. Motive. 17. There is but a short space of time granted us, therefore work the harder for Heaven before it be too late. Indeed we are apt to dream of a long life, as if we were not *sojourners*, but *natives*, and were to stay here alwaies. The blossom of childhood hopes to come to the budding of youth; and the bud of youth hopes to come to the flower of age; and the flower of age hopes to come to old age; and old age hopes to renew its strength as the Eagle *: But if we measure life by a pair of Scripture-compasses, it is very short: it is compared to a *flying shadow*, *Job* 8. 17. to an *hand-breadth*, *Psal.* 39. 5. as if there were but a span between the cradle and the grave, —*parum abest a nihilo* —— Is the time of life so short, and may be shorter than we are aware? what need is there zealously to improve it before it be slipp'd away? if time runs, let us *so run*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. He that hath a great business in hand, and the time

* Psal. 49. 11.

time allotted for doing it is but ſhort, had not need loſe any of that time. A Traveller that hath many miles to ride, and the night ready to approach, had need ſpur on the harder, that the night doth not overtake him: So we have a long journey, and the night of death is drawing on, how ſhould we uſe ſpurs to our ſluggiſh hearts, that we may go on more ſwiftly!

18. A man's perſonal day of grace may be ſhort. There is a time while the Scepter of grace is held forth, 2 *Cor.* 6.2. *Now is the accepted time.* The Lord hath prefixed a time wherein the means of Grace ſhall work or not work. If a perſon come not in by ſuch a time, God may ſay, *Never fruit grow on thee more.* A ſign this day of grace is paſt, when conſcience hath done ſpeaking, and God's Spirit hath done ſtriving. Whether this day may be longer or ſhorter, we cannot tell; but becauſe it may ſo ſoon expire, 'tis wiſdom to take the preſent opportunity, and uſe all violence for Heaven. The day of grace haſtens away: no man can (like *Joſhua*) bid this *Sun ſtand ſtill*; and if this critical day be once paſt, it cannot be recalled. The 18. Motive.

day

day of grace being loſt, the next is a *day of wrath. Hieruſalem* had a day, but ſhe loſt it, *Luke* 19. 44. *If thou hadſt known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.* After the expiration of the day of grace, no means or mercies ſhall prove effectual: Now ἐκρύβη, *They are hid from thine eyes.* Which is like the ringing a doleful knell over a dying perſon; therefore put forth all violence for Heaven, and do it in this, τὸ νῦν, before it be too late, and the decree be gone forth.

19. Motive 19. If you neglect the offering violence now, there will be no help for you after death. When men ſhall open their eyes in another world, and ſee into what a damned condition they have ſinned themſelves, O now what would they not do, what violence would they not uſe, if there were a poſſibility they might be ſaved! When once the door of mercy is ſhut, if God would make new terms far harder than before, they would readily ſeal to them. If God ſhould ſay to the ſinner after death, Wouldſt thou be content to return to the earth, and live there under the harrow

harrow of perſecution a thouſand years for my ſake? Yes Lord, I will ſubſcribe to this, and endure the world's fury, may I have but thy favour at laſt. But, wilt thou be content to ſerve an Apprentiſhip in Hell a thouſand years, where thou ſhalt feel the worm gnawing, and the fire burning? Yes Lord, even in Hell I ſubmit to be; ſo that after a thouſand years I may have a releaſe, and that *bitter cup* may paſs away from me. But, wilt thou for every lye thou haſt told, endure the rack? wilt thou for every oath that thou haſt ſworn, fill a *bottle of tears?* wilt thou for every ſin thou haſt committed, lye ten thouſand years in ſackcloth and aſhes? Yes Lord, all this and more if thou requireſt, I will ſubſcribe to; I am content now to uſe any violence, if I may but at laſt be admitted into thy Kingdom. No, will God ſay, there ſhall be no ſuch condition propoſed to thee, no poſſibility of favour, but thou ſhalt lye for ever among the damned, and *who is able to dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Oh therefore be wiſe in time, now while God's terms are more eaſie, embrace Chriſt, and Heaven, for after death

death there will be nothing to be done for your ſouls. The ſinner and the furnace ſhall never be parted.

20. Motive. 20. How without all Apology will you be left, if you neglect this violence for Heaven! Me-thinks I hear God thus expoſtulating the caſe with ſinners at the laſt day, Why did you not take pains for Heaven? hath not there been *a Prophet among you?* Did not my Miniſters *lift up their voice like a Trumpet?* did not they warn you? did not they perſwade you to uſe this violence, teling you that your ſalvation depended upon it? but the moſt melting Rhetorick of the Goſpel would not move you. Did not I give you time to look after your ſouls? *Rev.* 2. 21. *I gave her ſpace to repent* *. Did not you promiſe in your vow in Baptiſm, that you would take Heaven by force? *fighting under my banner againſt world, fleſh, and Devil?* Why then did you not uſe violence for the Kingdom? it muſt be either ſloth or obſtinacy. You could be violent for other things, for the world, for your luſts, but not for the Kingdom of Heaven: What can you ſay for your ſelves, why the ſentence of damnation ſhould not

* Μακροθυμίαν ſuam teſtatur, mulieris contumaciam accuſat. Paræus.

not paſs? O how will men be confounded and left ſpeechleſs at ſuch a time, and God's Juſtice ſhall be cleared in their condemnation! *Pſal.* 51. 4. *That thou maieſt be clear when thou judgeſt.* Though the Sinner ſhall drink a Sea of wrath, yet not one drop of injuſtice.

21. What a vexation it will be at the laſt to loſe the Kingdom of Glory for want of a little violence. When one ſhall think with himſelf, I did ſomething in Religion, but I was not violent enough; I prayed, but I ſhould have brought fire to the ſacrifice. I heard the word, but I ſhould have received the truth in love; I humbled my ſelf with faſting, but I ſhould with humiliation have joyned reformation. I gave Chriſt's poor good words; I did *bid them be warmed*, but I ſhould have clothed and fed them, and for want of a little more violence I have loſt the Kingdom. The Prophet bade the King of *Iſrael* ſmite upon the ground, 2 *King.* 13. 18. And he *ſmote thrice, and ſtaid, and the man of God was wroth, and ſaid, thou ſhouldeſt have ſmitten five or ſix times, then hadſt thou ſmitten Syria till thou* 21. Motive.

hadſt conſumed it. So a man doth ſomething in Religion, *he ſmites thrice, and then ſtaies*; whereas, had he but put forth a little more violence for Heaven he had been ſaved. What a miſchief is this but to half do ones work, and by ſhooting ſhort to loſe the Kingdom! O how will this cut a man to the heart when he is in Hell, to think, had I but gone a little further it had been better with me than it is now; I had not been thus tormented in the flame.

22. Motive. 22. The examples of the Saints of old, who have taken Heaven by force. *David* broke his ſleep for meditation, *Pſal.* 119. 148. His violence for Heaven was boiled up to zeal, *Pſal.* 119. 139. *My zeal hath conſumed me.* And St. *Paul did reach forth unto thoſe things which were before* *. The Greek word ſignifies to ſtretch out the neck: a metaphor taken from Racers that ſtrain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold upon the prize. We read of *Anna* a Propheteſs, *Luke* 2. 37. *She departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with faſtings and prayers night and day.* How induſtrious was *Calvin* in the Lord's Vineyard. When his friends perſwaded him

* ἐπεκτεινόμενος.

him for his health ſake, to remit a little of his labours, ſaith he, *Would ye have the Lord find me idle when he comes*?* *Luther* ſpent three hours a day in prayer. It is ſaid of holy *Bradford*, preaching, reading and prayer was his whole life. I rejoyce (ſaid Biſhop *Jewel*) that my body is exhauſted in the labours of my holy calling. How violent were the bleſſed Martyrs! they wore their fetters as ornaments; they ſnatched up torments as Crowns, and embraced the flames as chearfully as *Eliah* did the fiery Chariot that came to fetch him to Heaven. Let racks, fires, pullies, and all manner of torments come, ſo I may win Chriſt, ſaid *Ignatius*. Theſe pious ſouls *reſiſted unto blood*. How ſhould this provoke our zeal! write after theſe fair copies.

* *Quid vultis ut dominus veniens otioſum me invenirte, &c.* Beza in vita Calv.

23. If the Saints with all their violence have much ado to get to Heaven, how ſhall they come there who uſe no violence, 1 *Pet.* 4. 18. *If the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and ſinner appear!* If they that ſtrive as in an Agony can hardly get in at the ſtrait gate, what ſhall become of them that never ſtrive at all! If Saint *Paul*

23. Motive.

did *keep under his body*, by prayer, watching, faſting, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. how ſhall they be ſaved, that wholly let looſe the reins to the fleſh, and bathe themſelves in the luſcious ſtreams of carnal pleaſure.

24. Motive. 24. This ſweating for Heaven is not to endure long, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. *After ye have ſuffered a while* *. So after ye have offered violence a while, there ſhall be an end put to it. Your labour ſhall expire with your life. It is but a while and you ſhall have done weeping, wraſtling, praying; it is but a while and the Race will be over, and you ſhall receive *the end of your faith, the ſalvation of your ſouls*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 9. It is but a while and you ſhall have done your weary marches, you ſhall put off your Armour, and put on white Robes.

* ὀλίγον.

* Homer. ——πόλεμος δ' πέπαυται *.——

How ſhould this excite a ſpirit of holy violence! It is but a few months or daies and you ſhall reap the ſweet fruit of your obedience. The winter will be paſt, and the ſpring flowers of joy ſhall appear. Doctor *Tailor* comforted himſelf when he was going to the ſtake, I *have but two ſtiles to go over, and I ſhall*

le

be at my Father's houſe. Chriſtians, you have but a little way to go, a little more violence, a few more tears ſhed, a few more Sabbaths kept, and then your hopes ſhall be crowned with the beatifical ſight of God. When the vapour is blown away, then we may ſee the Sun clearly: So when this ſhort vapour of life is blown away, then we ſhall behold Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs in all his glory, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *We ſhall ſee him as he is.*

25. If you are not violent for Heaven, you walk antipodes to your own prayers. You pray that God's will may be done by you on earth, *as it is done in Heaven:* Now how is God's will done in Heaven? are not the Angels ſwift in doing the will of God? like the ſtars above the equinoctial, that are moved many millions of miles in an hour. The *Seraphims* are deſcribed with wings, to ſhew how velocious and winged they are in their obedience, *Iſa.* 6. 2. Now if you are not violent in your ſpiritual motion, you live in a contradiction to your own prayers. You are far from being as Angels, you creep as Snails in the way to Heaven. 25. Motive.

26. Motive. 26. This holy and bleſſed violence would make Chriſtians willing to die. What is it makes men ſo loth to die? they are as a Tenant that is loth to go out of an houſe, why ſo? becauſe their conſcience accuſeth them that they have taken little or no pains for Heaven: they have been ſleeping, when they ſhould have been working, and now death looks ghaſtly; they are afraid death will carry them priſoners to Hell. Whereas the Chriſtian that hath been active in Religion, and hath ſpent his time in the ſervice of God, he he can look death in the face with comfort: He who hath been violent for Heaven in this life, need not fear a violent death. Death ſhall do him no hurt, it ſhall not be a *deſtruction*, but a *deliverance*: it ſhall purge out ſin, and perfect glory. What made St. *Paul* ſay, *Cupio diſſolvi, I deſire to be diſſolved*, *Phil.* 1. 23. Surely the reaſon was, he had been *a man of violence*; he did ſpend himſelf for Chriſt, and *laboured more than all the other Apoſtles*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. And now he knew there was a Crown laid up for him. *Auguſtus* the Emperour did deſire that he might have an εὐθανασία, a quiet

quiet eaſie death. If any thing make our pillow eaſie at death, and we go out of the world quietly, it will be this holy violence that we have put forth in the buſineſs of Religion.

27. If for all that hath been ſaid, you will either ſit ſtill, or keep your ſweat for ſomething elſe than Heaven, *know*, there is a time ſhortly coming when you will wiſh you had uſed this violence. When ſickneſs ſeizeth on you, and your diſeaſe begins to grow violent, and you think God's Serjeant is at the door, then what wiſhes will you make, O that I had been more violent for Heaven! O that I had been praying when I was dancing and making merry! O that I had had a Bible in my hand, when I had a pair of Cards! how happy then might I have been! but alas, my caſe is miſerable! what ſhall I do! I am ſo ſick, that I cannot live, and ſo ſinful, that I dare not die! O that God would reſpite me a little longer, that he would put a few years more in my leaſe, that a little ſpace might be granted me to recover my loſt hours! As one ſaid on her death-bed, *Call time again*; but time will not be called again. At the hour 27. Motive.

of death ſinners will awake out of their lethargy, and fall into a phrenſie of horrour and deſpair; and ſhall not all theſe Arguments prevail with men to be violent for the Kingdom? what an hardned piece is a ſinner's heart! We read that at Chriſt's paſſion, the *Rocks rent*, *Mat.* 27.51. But nothing will move a ſinner; The Rocks will ſooner rend than his heart. If all that I have ſaid will not prevail, it is a ſign ruine is towards, 1 *Sam.* 2.25. *They hearkned not to the voice of their Father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them.*

Caution. Yet this Caution I muſt neceſſarily inſert, though we ſhall not obtain the Kingdom *without* violence, yet not *for* our violence. When we have done all, look up to Chriſt and free grace. *Bellarmine* ſaith, we merit Heaven *ex congruo*. No, though we are ſaved in the uſe of means, yet by grace too, *Epheſ.* 2.5. *By grace ye are ſaved.* Heaven is a donative, *Luke* 12. 32. *It is my Father's good pleaſure to give you a Kingdom.* Why may one ſay, I have uſed violence for it, I have wrought for the Kingdom: I, but it is a gift that free-grace beſtows. We muſt look up to Chriſt for acceptance:

tance: not our ſweat, but his blood ſaves: our labouring qualifies us for Heaven, but Chriſt's dying purchaſed Heaven. Alas, what is all that we can do in compariſon of glory? what is the ſhedding of a tear to a Crown? therefore we muſt renounce all in point of Juſtification, and let Chriſt and Free-grace carry away the glory of our ſalvation. God muſt help us in our working, *Phil.* 2. 12. *It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do.* How then can we merit by our working, when it is God that helps us in our working?

I ſhall in the next place lay down ſome Rules or Directions how to get this bleſſed violence. 5. Uſe, Direction.

1. Take heed of thoſe things which will hinder this violence for Heaven. 1. 1. *Removenda.*

1. Take heed of Unbelief. Unbelief is a great *remora*, as it is diſcouraging. When a Chriſtian is working for Heaven, unbelief whiſpers thus, To what purpoſe is all this pains? I had as good ſit ſtill. I may pray, and not be heard; I may work, and have no reward; I may come near Heaven, yet miſs it, *Jer.* 8. 12. 1.

And

And they ſaid, there is no hope. Unbelief deſtroies hope; and if you cut this ſinew of Religion, all violence for Heaven ceaſeth. Unbelief raiſeth a cloud of deſpondency in the heart. Alas, you will never be able to go thorow the work of Religion; ſo many precepts to obey; ſo many temptations to reſiſt; ſo many afflictions to bear, that you will *ſuccumbere oneri*, fall under the burden; you will tire in your march to Heaven. Unbelief raiſeth jealous thoughts of God, it repreſents him as an *auſtere Maſter*, and that if we fail in never ſo little a *punctilio*, he will take the extremity of the Law upon us. This diſcourageth the ſoul in the uſe of means. Unbelief doth as *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* did to the Jews, *Nehem.* 6. 9. *They made us afraid, ſaying, Their hands ſhall be weakned from the work.* Oh take heed of unbelief, it deſtroies this holy violence. We read of *Jereboam's* arm being withered, 1 *King.* 13. 4. Unbelief withers the arm of the ſoul, that it cannot ſtretch it ſelf forth to any ſpiritual action. Unbelief doth the Devil the greateſt kindneſs; it makes way for his temptations to enter, which do ſo inchant

inchant and bewitch us, that we cannot work. Beware of this ſin; believe the Promiſes: God *is good to the ſoul that ſeeks him, Lam.* 3.25. Do but ſeek him with importunity, and he will open both his heart and Heaven to thee.

2. Take heed of puzling your thoughts about Election. A Chriſtian may think thus, what ſhould I take pains? perhaps I am not elected, and then all my violence is to no purpoſe. Thus, many are taken off from the uſe of means, and the buſineſs of Religion is at a ſtand. Whereas no man can juſtly ſay, he is not elected. It is true, ſome of God's children have ſaid ſo in temptation: But as *Peter* in a *tranſfiguration* ſaid he knew not what; ſo theſe in a temptation. But no man can ſay on juſt grounds, he is not elected, unleſs he can prove that he hath ſinned the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. For any one to aſſert non-election is a ſin; for that which keeps him in ſin, muſt needs be ſinful: But this opinion keeps him in ſin; it diſcourageth him from the uſe of means, and cuts the ſinews of all endeavours; do not therefore perplex your thoughts about Election; this Book is *ſealed*, and

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no Angel can unclaſp it. The Rule Chriſtians are to go by, is, God's *Revealed Will*, not his *Secret*. God's revealed will is, that we ſhould pray and repent; by this we make our calling ſure; and by making our calling ſure, we make our election ſure. If I ſee the beds of ſpices grow and flouriſh, I know the Sun hath been there. And if I find the fruits of obedience in my heart, I may conclude God's electing love hath ſhined upon me, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 13. *God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation through ſanctification.*

3. Take heed of too much violence after the world; the world cools good affections. The earth puts out the fire. The world's ſilver Trumpet ſounds a retreat, and calls men off from their purſuit after Heaven. The world hindered the young man from following Chriſt; *he went away ſorrowfull:* whereupon, ſaith our Saviour, *How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God? Luke* 18. 24. *Demas* his Religion lay buried in the earth, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. *Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world.* It was a ſaying of *Pius Quintus*, When I firſt entred

entred into orders, I had ſome good hope of my ſalvation; when I became a Cardinal, I doubted of it; but ſince I came to be Pope, I do even deſpair of it. *Jonathan* purſued the victory till he came at the hony-comb, and then he ſtood ſtill, 1 *Sam.* 14. 27. Many are violent for the Kingdom of God, till gain or preferment offers it ſelf; when they meet with this hony, then they ſtand ſtill. The world blinds mens eyes that they do not ſee the way; and fetters their feet that they do not run in the way of God's Commandments. *Mithridates* King of *Pontus* being worſted by the *Romans*, and fearing he ſhould not eſcape them, cauſed a great deal of ſilver and gold to be ſcattered in the waies, which while the *Roman* ſouldiers were buſie in gathering, he got away from them. The like ſtratagem Satan uſeth, knowing what tempting things Riches are, he throws them in mens way, that while they are eager in gathering theſe, he may hinder them in their purſuit of happineſs. I have obſerved ſome who did once *Jehu*-like, drive on furiouſly in the cauſe of Religion, when the world hath come in upon

upon them, their Charet-wheels have been pulled off, and they have *driven on heavily* *. Were a man to climb up a steepy Rock, and had weights tied to his legs, they would hinder his ascent. Mens golden weights hinder them in climbing up this steepy Rock which leads to salvation. The world's musick charms men asleep, and when they are asleep, they are not fit to work. A thing cannot be carried violently to two extreams at once. The ship cannot go full sail to the East and West at the same time: So a man cannot be violent for Heaven and Earth at once: he may have Christ and the world, but cannot love Christ and the world, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15. He that is all fire for the world, will be all ice for Heaven. Take heed of engaging your affections too far in these secular things. Use the world as your servant, but do not follow it as your Master.

* *Fœnus pecuniæ, funus animæ.*

4. Take heed of indulging any lust. Sin lived in will spoil all violence for Heaven. Sin infeebles; 'tis like the cutting *Sampson*'s hair, and then the strength departs. Sin is *ægritudo animi*, the soul's sickness. Sickness takes a man off his legs,

legs, and doth ſo diſ-ſpirit him, that he is unfit for any violent exerciſe. A ſick man cannot run a Race. Sin lived in, takes a man quite off from duty, or makes him dead in it. The more lively the heart is in ſin, the more dead it is in prayer. How can he be earneſt with God for mercy, whoſe heart accuſeth him of ſecret ſin. Guilt breeds fear; and that which ſtrengthens fear, weakens violence. *Adam* having ſinned was afraid, and hid himſelf, *Gen.* 3. 10. When *Adam* had loſt his innocence, he loſt his violence. Therefore lay the Axe to the root; let ſin be hewn down; not only abſtain from ſin in the *Act*, but let the love of ſin be mortified, and let every ſin be put to the ſword. Many will leave all their ſins but one; ſave one ſin, and loſe one ſoul. One ſin is a fetter; a man may loſe the Race as well by having one fetter on his leg, as if he had more. I have read of a great Monarch *, that flying from his enemy, he threw away the Crown of gold on his head, that he might run the faſter: So that ſin which thou didſt wear as a Crown of gold, throw it away that thou maiſt the faſter run to the heavenly Kingdom.

* *Darius.*

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5. If you would be violent for Heaven, take heed of deſpondency of ſpirit. Be *ſerious*, but *chearfull*. He whoſe ſpirit is preſſed down with ſadneſs, is unfit to go about his work. An unchearful heart is unfit to pray, or praiſe God. When the ſtrings of a Lute are wet, it will not put forth any ſweet harmony. Such as go drooping under fears and diſcouragements, cannot be violent in Religion. When a ſouldier faints in the field, he ſoon lets fall his ſword. *David* chides himſelf out of his melancholy, *Pſal.* 43. 5. *Why art thou caſt down O my ſoul? why art thou diſquieted within me? hope yet in God.* A ſad heart makes a dull action. We uſe the Drum and Trumpet in Battel, that the noiſe of the Trumpet may excite and quicken the ſouldiers ſpirits, and make them fight more vigorouſly. Chearfulneſs is like muſick in battel, it excites a Chriſtian's ſpirits, and makes him vegete and lively in duty. What is done with chearfulneſs, is done with delight, and the ſoul flies moſt ſwiftly to Heaven upon the wing of delight.

6. If you would be violent for Heaven, take heed of a ſupine lazy temper. A ſlothful

ſlothful Chriſtian is like a fearful ſouldier, that hath a good mind to the plunder, but is loth to ſtorm the Caſtle: So he would fain have Heaven, but is loth to take it by ſtorm. —— *enerves animos odiſſe virtus ſolet* * —— Sloth is the ſoul's ſleep. Many inſtead of working out of ſalvation, ſleep away ſalvation. Such as will not labour, muſt be put at laſt to beg; they muſt beg as *Dives*, for one drop of water. An idle man (ſaith *Solomon*) *puts his hand in his boſom*, *Prov.* 19. 24. He ſhould have his hand to the plough, and he puts it in his boſom. God never made Heaven an hive for drones. Sloth is a diſeaſe apt to grow upon men; ſhake it off. A ſhip that is aſlug, is a prey to the Pirate. A ſluggiſh ſoul is a prey to Satan. When the Crocadile ſleeps with his mouth open, the Indian Rat gets into his belly, and eats his entrails. While men are aſleep in ſloth, the Devil enters and devours them.

* Valer. Max.

7. Take heed of conſulting with fleſh and blood. As good conſult with the Devil as the fleſh. The fleſh is a boſom-traitor. An enemy within the walls is worſt. The fleſh cries out, there is a

Lion in the way. The fleſh will bid thee *ſpare thy ſelf*, as *Peter* did Chriſt: O be not ſo violent for Heaven, *ſpare thy ſelf.* The fleſh ſaith as *Judas*, *What needs all this waſte?* So, what needs all this praying and wraſtling? why doſt thou waſte thy ſtrength? what needs all this waſte? The fleſh cries out for eaſe; it is loth to put its neck under Chriſt's yoak. The fleſh is for *pleaſure*; it had rather be gaming, than running the heavenly Race. There is a deſcription of fleſhly pleaſures, *Amos* 6. 4, 5, 6. *That lie upon beds of Ivory, and ſtretch themſelves upon their Couches, that chaunt to the ſound of the Viol; that drink Wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief ointments.* Theſe are the delights of the fleſh. Such an one was he ſpoken of in *Beard*'s Theatre, that did ſtrive to pleaſe all his five ſenſes at once. He did beſpeak a room richly hung with fair Pictures; he had the moſt delicious muſick; he had all the choice Aromaticks and Perfumes; he had all the Candies and curious Preſerves of the Confectioner; he was lodged in the bed with a beautiful Curtiſan: Thus did he indulge the fleſh, and ſwore that he would

would ſpend all his eſtate to live one week like a God, though he were ſure to be damned in Hell the next day. O take heed of holding intelligence with the fleſh! The fleſh is a bad Counſellor. St. *Paul* would *not confer with fleſh and blood*, *Gal.* 1. 16. The fleſh is a ſworn enemy to this holy violence, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye live after the fleſh ye ſhall die.* You have taken an oath in Baptiſm, to renounce the fleſh.

8. Take heed of liſtning to the voice of ſuch carnal friends as would call you off from this bleſſed violence. Fire when in Snow, will ſoon loſe its heat, and by degrees go out. Among bad company you will ſoon loſe your heat for Religion. The company of the wicked will ſooner cool you, than your company will heat them. Vinegar will ſooner ſowre the Wine, than the Wine will ſweeten the Vinegar. How often do, carnal friends the ſame to our ſouls, as infected perſons do to our bodies, convey the Plague. The wicked are ſtill diſſwading us from this violence; they will ſay, it is preciſeneſs and ſingularity. As Chriſt's friends laid hold on him when he was going to preach,

Mark 3. 21. *They went out to lay hold on him; for they ſaid, he is beſide himſelf.* Such as are unacquainted with the ſpirituality and ſweetneſs of Religion, judge all zeal phrenſie; and therefore will lay hold upon us to hinder us in this ſacred violence. When we are earneſt ſuitors to *Piety*, our carnal friends will raiſe ſome ill report of it, and ſo endeavour to break the match. *Galeacius* Marqueſs of *Vico*, being reſolved for Heaven, what a block in his way did he find his carnal Relations! and what ado had he to break through that impediment! Take heed of a ſnare in your boſom. This is one of the Devil's great ſubtilties, to hinder us from Religion by our neareſt Relations, and ſo to ſhoot us with our own rib. He tempted *Adam* by his wife *, *Gen.* 3. 6. Who would have ſuſpected the Devil there? He handed over a temptation to *Job* by his wife, *Job* 2. 9. *Doſt thou ſtill retain thine integrity?* What, notwithſtanding all theſe diſaſters that have befallen thee, doſt thou ſtill pray, and ſerve God? Throw off his livery, *Curſe God and die.* Thus would the Devil have cooled *Job*'s violence

* *Per coſtam petit cor.*

violence for Heaven; but the ſhield of his faith quenched this *fiery dart*. *Spira*'s friends ſtood in his way to Heaven, for adviſing with them about *Luther*'s Doctrine; they perſwaded him to recant, and ſo openly abjuring his former faith, he felt an Hell in his conſcience: Take heed of ſuch tempters; reſolve to hold on your violence for Heaven, though your carnal friends diſſwade you. 'Tis better to go to Heaven with their hatred, than to Hell with their love. It was a ſaying of St. *Hierom*, If my Parents ſhould perſwade me to deny Chriſt; if my Mother ſhould ſhew me her breaſts that gave me ſuck *; if my wife ſhould go to charm me with her embraces, I would forſake all and fly to Chriſt. If our deareſt friends alive would lie in our way to Heaven, we muſt either leap over them, or tread upon them.

* *Si mater mihi uberа oſtendat, &c.*

9. Take heed of ſetting up your ſtay in the loweſt pitch of grace. He that hath the leaſt grace, may have *motion*, but not *violence*. It is a pitiful thing to be contented with juſt ſo much grace as will keep life and ſoul together.

* *Socordis animæ eſt dicere* ſufficit mihi ſi ſalver, *quiſque autem conari debet ut in Cœlo ſit primus.* Corn. a Lap.

together *. A ſick man may have life, but is not lively. Grace may live in the heart, but is ſickly, and doth not flouriſh into lively acts. Weak grace will not withſtand ſtrong temptations, or carry through great ſufferings: it will hardly *follow Chriſt upon the water.* Little grace will not do God much ſervice. A Tree that hath but little ſap, will not have much fruit. It may be ſaid of ſome Chriſtians, though they are not *ſtill-born*, yet they are *ſtarvelings* in grace: They are like a ſhip that comes with much ado to the Haven. Oh labour to grow to further degrees of ſanctity. The more grace, the more ſtrength; and the more ſtrength, the more violence.

10. If you would be violent for Heaven, take heed of this opinion, That it is not ſo hard to get the Kingdom; leſs violence will ſerve turn. He that thinks he need not run a Race ſo faſt, will be apt to ſlack his pace. This hath undone many. Who will take pains for Heaven, that thinks it may be had at a cheaper rate? But if it be

be ſo eaſie, what needs Chriſt ſay, *Strive as in an Agony.* What needed *Paul* beat down his body? Why doth the Text ſpeak of taking the Kingdom by force? Is not converſion called a *new birth? Joh.* 3. 7. a *Creation, Pſal.* 51. 10. and is that facil? O take heed of phancying that work eaſie which is both *above* nature, and *againſt* it. 'Tis as great a wonder for a ſoul to be ſaved, as to ſee a mill-ſtone to be lift up into the middle Region.

2. Uſe thoſe means which will promote this holy violence. 2. *Promovenda.*

1. Keep up daily prayer. Prayer is the bellows that blows up the affections; and a Chriſtian is moſt active, when his affections are moſt violent. Prayer keeps the trade of Religion agoing. Prayer is to the ſoul, as the animal ſpirits are to the body; the animal ſpirits make the body more agile and lively; ſo doth prayer the ſoul. That the motion of a Watch may be quicker, the ſpring muſt be wound up. Chriſtian, winde up thy heart every day by prayer. Prayer fetcheth in ſtrength from Chriſt; and when his ſtrength comes in, it ſets the ſoul a

working. Prayer leaves the heart in a good frame: As the morning Sun leaves a warmth in the room all the day after. When Christians lay aside prayer, or leave off fervency in it, then by degrees they lose their holy violence.

2. If you would be violent for Heaven, get under lively preaching. The word is *quick and powerfull*, *Heb.* 4. 12. It puts life into a dead heart. It is both a sword to cut down sin, and a spur to quicken grace. The word is a fire to thaw a frozen heart, *Jer.* 23. 29. *Is not my Word fire?* As good almost be without preaching, as be under such preaching as will not warm. It is a part of the Word, not only to *inform*, but to *inflame*, *Psal.* 119. 50. *Thy Word hath quickened me.* 'Tis the lively dispensation of the Oracles of Heaven must animate us, and make us lively in our operation.

3. If you would be violent for Heaven, get your hearts filled with love to Religion. This is like the *Rod of Myrtle* in the Travellers hand, (*Pliny* speaks of,) which makes him fresh and lively in his travel, and keeps him from being weary. When a man hath warmed himself

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at the fire, now he is fitteſt for work. If you would be violent in working out ſalvation, warm your ſelves at this fire of love. A man will be violent for nothing but what he loves. Why are men ſo eager in their purſuit after gold, but becauſe they love it. Love cauſeth delight, and delight cauſeth violence. What made St. *Paul* labour more than all the other Apoſtles? *The love of Chriſt conſtrained him*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. Love is like Oil to the wheels. Get love to Religion, and you will never be weary; you will count thoſe the beſt hours which are ſpent with God. He that digs in a ſilver Vein ſweats, yet love to the ſilver makes his labour delightfull.

4. If you would be violent, be vigilant. The Prophet ſtood upon his *Watch-tower* *, *Hab.* 2. 1. Why are Chriſtians ſo liſtleſs in their work, but becauſe they are ſo careleſs in their watch. Did they but watch to ſee how their enemy watcheth, they would be violent to reſiſt him: Did they but watch to ſee how their time runs, or rather flies, they would be violent to redeem it: Did they but watch

* *Tempus excubiarum eſt vita.* Eraſm. Origen.

watch to ſee how their hearts loiter in Religion, they would ſpur on faſter to Heaven. The reaſon there is ſo little violence in Religion, is, becauſe there is ſo little vigilance. When Chriſtians neglect their ſpiritual watch, and grow ſecure, now their motion to Heaven is retarded, and Satan's motions to ſin are renewed. Our ſleeping time, is Satan's tempting time.

5. If you would be violent for the Kingdom, bind your heart to God by ſacred vows. A ſervant will be more diligent after he is bound to his Maſter. Vow to the Lord, that by his grace you will act more vigorouſly in the ſphere of Religion, *Pſalm* 56. 12. *Thy vows are upon me O God.* A vow binds the votary to duty. He looks upon himſelf now as under a ſpecial obligation, and that quickens endeavour. No queſtion but a Chriſtian may make ſuch a vow, becauſe the ground of it is morally good; he vows nothing but what he is bound to do, namely, to walk more cloſely with God. Only remember, that we vow not in our own ſtrength, but Chriſts.. We muſt confide in him as well for *ſtrength* as *righteouſneſs*,

teouſneſs, Iſa. 45, 24. *In the Lord I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*

If you would be violent for Heaven, be ſure you make going to Heaven your buſineſs. What a man looks on as a παρεργον, or thing by the *by*, he will never be violent for; but that which he makes his buſineſs, he will be induſtrious about. A man looks upon his trade as the only thing to get a livelihood by, and he follows it cloſe: So if we would but look upon Religion as the main buſineſs wherein our ſalvation is concerned, we ſhould be violent in it, *Luke* 10. 42. *But one thing is needfull.* This is the *One Thing*, to get Chriſt and Heaven *. this is the end we came into the world for. If we could thus look upon the things of eternity as our buſineſs, the *One Thing*, how earneſt ſhould we be in the purſuit of them. 6.

* *Unum eſt (ſi ſalvi eſſe velimus) quod omnino nobis incumbit, cura nimirum pietatis, huic uni impenſe vacat* Maria *cujus fructus in æternum manſurus eſt. Cætera quæ curantur caduca ſunt* καὶ ἐφήμερα. Grotius.

If you would be violent, have Heaven continually in your eye. This made Chriſt violent to the death; he had an eye to the joy ſet before him, *Heb.* 7.

Heb. 12. 2. Set the Crown ever before you, and that will provoke endeavour.

—*immenſum gloria calcar habet*—

The Mariner hath his hand to the Stern, and his eye to the Star. While we are working, let us have an eye to that place where is Chriſt the *bright morning Star.* How willingly doth a man wade through a deep water, that ſees the dry Land before him, and is ſure to be crowned as ſoon as he comes at ſhore? Every time you caſt your eye up to Heaven, think, above that ſtarry Heaven is the Empyræan Heaven I am ſtriving for. Thus did *Moſes*; the eye of his faith quickned the feet of his obedience, *Heb.* 11. 26. *He looked to the recompence of Reward.* When Chriſtians loſe their proſpect of Heaven, then they begin to ſlacken their pace in the way thither.

8. If you would be violent for the Kingdom, accompany with ſuch as are violent. When we want fire, we uſe to go to our neighbours hearth and fetch

fetch fire. Often be among the godly, and ſo you ſhall fetch ſome heat and quickning from them, *Pſal.* 119.63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee**. Good company quickens. The holy diſcourſe and example of one Saint, doth whet and ſharpen another. The Saints never go ſo faſt to Heaven, as when they go in company. One Chriſtian helps forward another. In other Races that are run, many times one hinders another; but in this Race to Heaven, one Chriſtian helps forward another, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 11. *Edifie one another, even as alſo ye do.* O let not this Article of our Creed be forgotten, *The Communion of Saints.*

* חבר אני *Adjunxi me.* Vatablus.

If you would be violent, never leave till you have the Spirit. Deſire of God to put forth the ſweet violence of his Spirit; the Spouſe begg'd a gale of the Spirit, *Cant.* 4. 16. *Awake O North-wind, blow O ſouth.* When God's Spirit blows upon us, now we go full ſail to Heaven. When the Spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels, then they moved, *Ezek.* 1. 21. The wheels of our endeavour move apace, when the Spirit of God is in theſe wheels. 9.

Seeing

Seeing there are ſo many violen winds of temptation blowing us back ward, we had need have the violen wind of God's Spirit blowing us for ward to Heaven. Let this ſuffice to have ſpoken of the means for this ho ly violence.

But may ſome ſay, we have uſe this violence for Heaven, what re mains for us to do? As the people ſaid to Chriſt, *Luke* 1. 13. *What ſhal we do?*

You that have been violent for Hea ven (aged Chriſtians) let me beſeech you ſtill to keep alive this holy vio lence. Not only keep up duty, but violence in duty. Remember, you have that corruption within you, which is ready to abate this bleſſed violence. The brighteſt coal hath thoſe aſhes growing on it, as is apt to choak the fire. You have thoſe inbred corrupti ons, that like aſhes, are ready to choak the fire of your zeal. How was *Peter's* grace cooled when he denied Chriſt! The Church of *Epheſus* loſt her keen edge of Religion, *Rev.* 2. 4. Take heed of declining in your affections. Be not like a body in an atrophy: be

moſt

moſt violent at laſt. A ſtone, the nearer it is to the center, the more violent it is in its motion. You have but a little time now to work for God, therefore work the harder. Be like the Church of *Thyatira*, Her *laſt works were more than her firſt* *, *Rev.* 2. 19. Be as the Sun that ſhines brighteſt before its ſetting: As the Swan that ſings ſweeteſt before its death, *Rom.* 13. 11. *Your ſalvation is nearer than when you believed.* If your ſalvation be nearer, your violence ſhould be greater. How ſhould you quicken your pace, when you are within ſight of the Kingdom! He is an happy man, of whom it may be ſaid, ſpiritually, as of *Moſes* literally before his death, *Deut.* 34. 7. *His eyes waxed not dim, and his natural force was not abated.* So a Chriſtian's force and violence for Heaven is not abated: He keeps the beſt wine of his life till laſt.

* *Egregia laus non modo non ſatiſcere, ſed indies proficere in melius.* Grotius.

Here is ſtrong conſolation to the violent Chriſtian; thou art in the way to the Kingdom. Though perhaps thou haſt not a bunch of Grapes in the way,

Uſe 6. Conſolat.

way, (I mean that joy which some meet with) yet it is happy that thou art in the way. Bless God that while some lye in the total neglect of duty, God hath given thee an heart to seek him, *Psal.* 105. 3. *Let the hearts of them rejoyce that seek the Lord.* Nay, God hath not only given thee an heart to do duty, but to do duty mixed with love, which makes it *savoury meat*, and to do duty stamped with fervency, which makes it pass currant with God. O bless God who hath raised thee off the bed of sloth, and stirred up the zeal of thy soul for Heaven. He who hath made thee *violent*, will make thee *victorious*. Wait a while, and thou shalt be possessed of a Kingdom. When *Moses* went up to receive God's Commands, he staid six daies on the Mount, and on the seventh day, God called to him, *Exod.* 24. 16. Though we wait long, and have not the thing waited for, yet let us continue doing our duty; shortly, God will call us from Heaven, *Come up hither*, and we shall go from the Mount of *Faith*, to the Mount of *Vision*, and behold those glorious things which

eye

eye hath not ſeen, nor can it enter into man's heart to conceive.

But, may a child of God ſay, I fear I am none of thoſe violent ones that ſhall take Heaven: I find ſuch a deadneſs of heart in duty, that I queſtion whether I ſhall ever arrive at the Kingdom. *Object.*

This deadneſs of the heart may ariſe from natural cauſes. Weakneſs of body may occaſion indiſpoſition of mind. Thy prayer may be weak, becauſe thy body is weak. A Lute that is cracked cannot ſend forth ſo ſweet a ſound as if it were whole. *Reſp.*

2. This indiſpoſition of ſoul perhaps is only caſual, and for a time; it may be in a deep fit of melancholy, or in deſertion. When the Sun is gone from our climate, the earth is as it were in deſertion, and the trees are without bloſſom or fruit; but this is only for a time: Let but the Sun return again in Spring, and now the herbs flouriſh, and the trees put forth their fruit: So when God hides his face, there is a deadneſs upon a Chriſtian's heart; he prayes *as if he prayed not:* But let the Sun of Righteouſneſs return, now he is divinely animated, and is as vigorous

and lively in his operation as ever, he now reproves his *first love*. Therefore thou weak Chriſtian, be not diſcouraged, ſo long as thou doſt not allow thy ſelf in thy diſtemper; a dead heart is thy burden, look up to Chriſt thy High-Prieſt, who is merciful to bear with thy infirmities, and is mighty to help them.

THE

THE HAPPINESS OF Drawing near to GOD.

PSALM 73. 28.

But it is good for me to draw near to God.

THis Pſalm is no leſs elegant than ſacred: It is calculated for the Meridian of God's Church in all times; but eſpecially it is fit for the godly to meditate upon in times of calamity. It is intitled *a Pſalm of Aſaph**. *Aſaph* was a* man divinely inſpired, a *Prophet*; as alſo one of the Maſters of muſick:

* מזמור לאסף

* Mollerus.

It is called *a Pſalm of Aſaph*, either becauſe he compoſed it, or becauſe it was committed to him to ſing *. This holy man here ſeems to have a dialogue with himſelf concerning providence. He was ready to call God's providences to the bar of reaſon, and enquire the equity of them. How doth it ſeem juſt, that they who are evil ſhould enjoy ſo much good; and they who are good ſhould endure ſo much evil*? While *Aſaph* was debating the caſe with himſelf, at laſt his faith got above his ſenſe; he conſidered that the wicked were ſet *in locis lubricis, in ſlippery places*. And like ſuch as go upon Ice, their feet would ſoon ſlide; or like ſuch as walk on Mines of Powder, they would ſoon be blown up. *Verſ.* 18. This did both reſolve his doubt, and compoſe his Spirit.

* *Traditus ipſi* Aſaph, *cantori, decantandus.* Vatablus.

* *Impii ebrietate fortunæ ad inſaniam uſque ſibi placent, & miſeriis plerumque ſubjacent pii.* Munſt. Clarius.

The proœmium or entrance into the Pſalm, is not to be forgotten; *Truly God is good to Iſrael*; ſo the Hebrew renders it, *certainly* *: Without diſpute, this is a golden maxim muſt be held.

אך־טוב

In the *Septuagint* it is *vox admirantis*, it

it is ſet out by way of admiration, *O how good is God to Iſrael*!* What Angel in Heaven can expreſs! The vulgar reads it, *veruntamen*, *yet* God is good; as if the *Pſalmiſt* had ſaid, though the Candle of proſperity ſhines on the wicked, they have not only what their heart can wiſh, but *more than heart can wiſh*, *Verſe* 7. And though the godly are ſorely afflicted, mingling their drink with weeping; yet for all this, *God is good to Iſrael.* Here is the *Fountain*, the *Stream*, the *Ciſtern*: the Fountain, *God*; the Stream, *Goodneſs*; the *Ciſtern* into which it runs, *Iſrael.* Indeed God is good *to all*, *Pſal.* 145. 9. The ſweet dew falls upon the Thiſtle as well as the Roſe. But though God be good to all, yet not *alike* good to all. He is good to *Iſrael* in a ſpecial manner. The wicked have *ſparing* mercy, but the godly have *ſaving* mercy. And if God be good to his people, hen it is good for his people to draw near to him. So it is in the Text, *It is good for me to draw near to God.*

* ὡς ἀγαθὸς ὁ θεὸς

1. We may look upon the words in *Hypotheſi*; here is ſomething implied, *viz.* that by nature we are far off from God. *Drawing near* implies a ſtrangeneſs 1.

and diſtance. In our lapſed eſtate we loſt two things, the image of God, and communion with God, *Pſal.* 58.3. *The wicked are eſtranged from he womb.* Every ſtep a ſinner takes, is a going further from God. The *Prodigal*'s going into a *far Country*, *Luke* 15. 14. was an emblem of the ſinner's going afar off from God. How far are they diſtant from God, who have been travelling forty or fifty years from their Father's houſe! and which is worſe, ſinners are not only far from God, but they do not deſire to be near him, *Jer.* 4. 10. *They have loved to wander*; Sin doth not care to be near holineſs. The wicked get as far as they can from God: Like *Cain*, who *went out from the preſence of the Lord*, *Gen.* 4. 16. That is the Church of God, where were the viſible ſigns of God's preſence: he eſtranged himſelf from God as much as he could: he *fell to building*, thereby thinking to drown the noiſe of his conſcience, as the *Italians* of old were wont to drown the noiſe of thunder by ringing their Bells. Sinners think God's company may be beſt ſpared, *Iſaiah* 30. 11. *Cauſe the Holy One of Iſrael*

Iſrael to ceaſe from before us. Let us ſhut God out of our company; let him be no more named among us. A bad eye loves not to be near the Sun.

Let us be deeply humbled for our fall in *Adam*, which hath ſet us at ſuch a diſtance from the bleſſed God. Heaven and Earth are not ſo far aſunder as God and the ſinner. The further we are from God, the nearer we are to Hell. The further a man ſails from the Eaſt, the nearer he is to the Weſt. Let us think of returning to God by Repentance. Say as the Church, *Hoſ.* 2. 7. *I will go and return to my firſt Husband, for then was it better with me than now.* uſe.

2. Let us conſider the text in *Theſi*; *It is good for me to draw near to God.* 2.

The text falls into theſe parts.

1. The Perſon, *me.*
2. The Act, *draw near.*
3. The Object, *God.*
4. The excellency of the Act, *it is good.*

The Propoſition is this,

That it is a great duty incumbent upon Chriſtians to draw near to God.

Heb. 10. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart.* For the illuſtration of the Propoſition, four things are to be enquired into.

1. How we are capable of drawing near to God.

2. Where we draw near to God.

3. The manner of our drawing near to God.

4. Why we muſt draw near to God.

1. 1. How we are capable of drawing near to God. By nature we ſtand in oppoſition to God, *Col.* 1. 21. *alienated and enemies.* How then can we approach nigh to God? *Anſw.* It is through a Mediatour*. Out of Chriſt God *is a conſuming fire, Heb.* 12. 29. But Jeſus Chriſt is the ſcrene between us and divine Juſtice. Chriſt as our High Prieſt aſſumes our fleſh. Chriſt's fleſh is called a *vail, Heb.* 10. 20. As *Moſes* when his face ſhone ſo exceeding bright, put a vail upon it, and then *Iſrael* might approach near to him, and look upon him: So Chriſt having vailed himſelf with our humane nature, we may now draw nigh to God and behold him.

* *Ipſe ſolus eſt cujus gratia Deum habemus propitium.* Calv.

And

And as Christ makes way for us into the Holy of Holies by his *Incarnation*; so by his *Crucifixion*: he died to make God and us friends. The Divine Law being infringed, God's Justice was provoked, and satisfaction demanded, before we could approach to God in an amicable way. Now here Christ as our Priest shed his blood for our sins, and so made the attonement, *Col.* 1. 20. *Having made peace through the blood of his Cross* *. As *Joseph* being so great at Court, made way for all his Brethren to draw near into the King's presence, *Gen.* 47. 2. So Jesus Christ is our *Joseph*, that doth make way for us by his blood, that we may now come near into God's presence. Through Christ God is pleased with us; he holds forth the *golden Scepter*, that we may draw near, and touch the top of the Scepter.

* *Pignus & pretium nostræ cum Deo pacificationis fuit sanguis Christi.* Calvin.

2. Where we draw near to God. 2.

Answ. In the use of his Ordinances. In the Word we draw near to his *Holy Oracle*; in the Sacrament we draw near to his *Table*. In the one we hear his voice; in the other we have his kiss.

Besides,

Beſides, we do in a ſpecial manner draw near to God in prayer. Prayer is the ſoul's private converſe and intercourſe with * God. Prayer whiſpers in God's ears, *Pſal.* 18. 6. *My prayer came before him, even into his ears.* In prayer we draw ſo nigh to God, that we *take hold of him*, *Iſa.* 64. 6. God draws nigh to us by his Spirit, and we draw nigh to him in prayer.

* Πᾶσι προσευχόμενος καὶ πρὸς θεὸν διαλέγεται. Chryſ.

3. 3. The *modus*, or manner of our drawing near to God. God's ſpecial reſidence is in Heaven, and we draw near to God not by the feet of our *bodies*, but our *ſouls* *. The affections are the *feet of the ſoul*; by theſe we move towards God. *David* drew nigh to God in his deſires, *Pſam* 73. 25. *There is none on earth I deſire beſides thee.* He did ſhoot his heart into Heaven by pious ejaculations. Spirits may have intercourſe at a diſtance.

* Non greſſibus corporis, ſed animi.

4. 1. 4. Why we muſt draw near to God. Becauſe he is our Maker *, *in him we live.* He hath given us our bodies; they are his curious *needle-work*, *Pſal.* 139. 15. And as he hath wrought the Cabinet; ſo he hath put the Jewel in it, the precious ſoul; and ſurely if we had

* Pſalm 100. 3.

had our being from him, we cannot breath without him: there is good reaſon we ſhould draw near to him in a way of homage and obſervance.

2. God is our Benefactor; he crowns us with variety of bleſſings; he gives health and eſtate; every bit of bread we eat is reached to us by the hand of Divine Bounty. Is there not great reaſon we ſhould draw near to him that feeds us. Give a beaſt provender, and he will follow you all the field over. Not to draw near to him who is our Benefactor, is worſe than bruitiſh.

3. God is the *ſummum bonum*, the chief good. There's enough in God to ſatiſfie the immenſe deſire of the Angels. He is *omnimode dulcis*, the quinteſſence of ſweetneſs; in him all perfections are concentred, wiſdom, holineſs, goodneſs: he hath *rivers of pleaſure*, where the ſoul ſhall bathe it ſelf for ever with infinite delight, *Pſal.* 36. So that here is ground ſufficient for our drawing near to God; he is the *chief good**. Every thing deſires to approach to its happineſs.

* *Bonum in quo omnia bona.*

1. See the right *genius* and temper of uſe 1.

of a gracious ſoul, it is ever drawing near to God; it loves to converſe with him in private. A perſon truly regenerate is not able to ſtay away long from God, *Pſal.* 63. 8. *My ſoul followeth hard after God.* A pious ſoul cannot but draw near to God.

1. Out of the intire love which he bears to God. 'Tis the nature of love to draw the heart to the object loved. He that loves his friend will often give him a viſit: He that loves God will viſit him. The heart aſcends to God in a *fiery Chariot* of love.

2. A gracious ſoul cannot but draw near to God, becauſe of the intimate relation between God and him. God is a Father, *Iſa.* 64. 8. *Doubtleſs thou art our Father.* Doth not the child delight to draw near to his Father? No Father like to God for love: * his children ſhall never want: he hath Land enough to give to all his heirs. He loves his children ſo intirely, that he will never diſ-inherit them*. How then can Believers keep away from their Father? they know not how to be long out of his preſence.

* Πατὴρ οἰκτιρμῶν. 2 Cor. 1. 3.

* Joh. 13. 1.

3. A gracious ſoul cannot chuſe but draw

draw near to God, becauſe he hath found ſo much ſweetneſs and content in it. While he hath drawn near to God, he hath drawn virtue from him. Never did *Jonathan* taſte ſo much ſweetneſs when he dipp'd his Rod in the hony-comb, 1 *Sam.* 14. 27. as the ſoul finds in communion with God. In drawing near to God, a Chriſtian's heart hath been warmed and melted; the Lord hath kindled his ſacrifice from Heaven. In his approaches to God, he hath had the illapſes of the Spirit, the incomes of God's love, the prælibations of glory: God hath given him a *bunch of Grapes* by the way; he hath *taſted that the Lord is good** ; no wonder then he is ſo frequent in his approaches to the divine Majeſty; he hath found the comfort of drawing near to God.

* Pſal. 34. 8.

2. It reproves them, who in ſtead of drawing near to God, draw near to the world. The world ingroſſeth all their time and thoughts, *Phil.* 3. 19. *Who mind earthly things.* A good Chriſtian uſeth the world for his neceſſity, but his main work is to draw near to God. Whoever he compounds with, and paies ſhort, he will be ſure God ſhall not be a loſer. He

Uſe 2. Reproof. 1. Branch.

gives

gives God a daily ſacrifice; *he follows God fully*, *Numb.* 14. 14. But covetous perſons make the world their treaſure, and what is their treaſure, that doth moſt command their hearts. Worldlings live *by ſenſe*; and to talk to them of drawing nigh to God, is to ſpeak riddles and paradoxes to them. They can no more live out of the *earth*, than the fiſh out of the *water*. They have the Serpent's curſe upon them *to lick the duſt*. Things of a worldly aſpect draw away the heart from God. They are *retinacula ſpei* (as *Tertullian* ſaith) they hinder our paſſage to the holy Land. Had not the fall beat off mens head-piece of wiſdom, they would think thus with themſelves, if there be any beauty in the world, what is there in God that made it *? he gives the flower its colour and odour; he gives the diamond its luſtre; he gives food its delicious taſt; and if there be ſuch ſweetneſs in creatures, what is there in God? he is infinitely better than all. Shall theſe poor things draw off our hearts from God? ſhall the drop draw us from the fountain? ſhal the light of the Taper draw us from the Sun? ſhall we admire the gif, and forget the giver? *Solomon* ſpeaks

* *Quod efficit tale, id eſt magis tale.*

ſpeaks of a generation of men, *madneſs is in their heart*, *Eccl.* 9.3. Sure they who draw near the world, and leave God, *madneſs is in their heart.* O how empty and inſignificant are all other things without God! they are in their matter earthly, in their procuring painful, in their fruition ſurfeiting, in their duration dying, in their operation damning.

2. It reproves them who draw nigh to God, but it is hypocritically; they draw nigh with their *lips*, but not with their *hearts*, *Iſa.* 29.13. The Jews (ſaith one) uſe great ſhews of adoration, and in their Synagogues burn Lamps to the honour of God *, but no inward devotion can be perceived. What is *pomp* without *piety?* Sinners give God the worſhip of their bodies, but keep their hearts for ſomething elſe they love better. The heart is a Virgin God himſelf is Suitor to. *Prov.* 23.26. *My Son give me thy heart* *. To draw near to God with the body, but not the heart, is to abuſe God. 'Tis as if one ſhould come into an Apothecaries ſhop and aſk for cordial water, and he ſhould give him an empty glaſs. To draw nigh to God without an heart, is to play a devotion, and to go to hell covered with Religion's mantle

2. Branch.

* Europ. Spec.

* *Cor omni nobili nobilius.* Bern.

3. It

3. Branch. 3. It reproves them who inſtead of drawing near to God, draw back from God: theſe are Renegadoes; they once ſeemed to put forth fair bloſſoms, and gave good hope of their converſion, but their *Spring* is changed to *Autumn*. Either fear of perſecution, or hope of preferment hath turned them away from the profeſſion of Religion. Such were *Bolſecus*, *Petrus Carolus*, and others *, *Hoſ.* 8. 3. *Iſrael hath caſt off the thing that is good.* At *Ausborough* the Papiſts give *ten florens* a year to ſuch as revolt from the Proteſtant Faith. Men draw back from God, becauſe they never had the Spirit of God to confirm them. Such as have the Spirit's indwelling, never take their final leave of God. The Spirit in the heart is called an *earneſt* *, not a *pawn*. A pawn may be called for again, and taken away, but an *earneſt* remains, and is part of the ſumm behind. O how odious is it to draw back from God! The name *Judas* is had in abomination at this day. Sure no Proteſtant would baptize his child *Judas*. And how diſmal was his end! he who had no bowels to an innocent Chriſt, his bowels guſhed out. If it be good to draw near to God, it muſt

* *Ad Cœlum non retrò itur.*

* 2 Cor. 1. 22.

must needs be evil to draw back from him, *Pſal.* 37. 27. *Thou haſt deſtroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*

3. It exhorts us all to draw near to God. 'Tis more ingenious to draw near to God voluntarily, than to be drawn near to him by affliction. God is the *terminus ad quem*; whither ſhould the ſoul go but to God? where can the Bee reſt but in its hive? To draw near to God is as well a *priviledge* as a *duty*. There are but two Motives I ſhall uſe to perſwade to this drawing near to God. Uſe 3. Exhortation.

1. The firſt is in the text; to draw near to God is a good thing. *'Tis good for me.* That it is *good*, appears ſeveral waies. 1. Motive.

To draw near to God, is our wiſdom. *The price of Wiſdom is above Rubies*, *Job* 28. 18. No Jewel we wear doth ſo adorn us as wiſdom; and wherein is our wiſdom ſeen more than in our appropinquation to God? 'Tis judged wiſdom to keep in with great men, *Prov.* 19. 6. *Many will intreat the favour of the Prince.* A Prince's love is mutable. How often doth the ſun-ſhine of his royal favour ſet in a cloud. But it is wiſdom to draw near to God, he is the ſweeteſt friend, and the foreſt enemy. 1.

2. To draw near to God is our honour. It is counted an honour to converſe with noble perſonages. What an high dignity is it, that the great God will ſuffer ſinful duſt to draw near to him! Surely the Apoſtle did ſpeak it with an holy boaſting, 1 *Joh.* 1.3. *Our fellowſhip is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus*: As if he had ſaid, we do not walk with the Pedanticks of the world; we are of the blood-royal of Heaven; we live above other men; *Our fellowſhip is with the Father.* That the King of Kings will hold forth a *Golden Scepter* to us, invite and welcome us into his preſence, and bid us draw near; this is no ſmall favour, 1 *Sam.* 22.2. *Every one that was diſtreſſed and in debt, drew near to David, and he became a Captain over them.* So that we who are diſtreſted and in debt, may draw near to God; and that he will not only be our *Captain*, but our *Husband*, *Iſa.* 54.5. What tranſcendent dignity is this! It is a wonder God doth not kick us out of his preſence, but that we ſhould be admitted to *ſee the King's face*; and that he ſhould ſend us dainties off from his own table, is an honour fitter for Angels than men.

3. To draw near to God is *our ſafety*. God is

is a *ſtrong Tower*, *Prov.* 18.10. * It is good in times of danger to draw near to a Fort or Caſtle, *Hab.* 3.4. *He had horns coming out of his hands, and there was the hiding of his power.* The *horns coming out of God's hands*, are to puſh his enemies; and *the hiding of his power*, is to ſafeguard his people. God is an impregnable ſtrong hold. Indeed there is no ſafety, but in drawing nigh to God. If the ſheep ſtraggles from the fold, it is in danger of the Wolf; if we ſtraggle and wander from God, we are in danger of Satan.

* מגדל עוז *Metaphora à terrenis propugnaculis ad Deum tranſlata, qui aſylum eſt eorum qui ad illum confugiunt.* Cartwr.

To draw near to God is our peace. The only thing which breaks our peace, is, when we do not keep cloſe to God: but what harmony, yea Heaven is in the ſoul when it draws nigh to God! *Pſal.* 119. 165. *Great peace have they that love thy Law.* This peace like Pearl in broth is cordial. *David* drew nigh to God, for he was *ever with him*, *Pſal.* 139. 17. And this made his pillow ſoft when he went to ſleep, *Pſal.* 4. 8. *I will lay me down in peace* *; As the hony-dew falls upon the leaf: O that ſweet ſerenity which drops as hony upon the ſoul, while it is drawing nigh to God! How comfortable is it to draw near the Sun! and how ſweet

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* בשלום יחדו

is it to approach nigh to the *Sun of Righteouſneſs.*

5. To draw near to God is our riches. 'Tis good drawing near a golden Mine. If we draw near to God, he will enrich us with promiſes, and divine conſolations; he will enrich us with the *Pearl of price, Epheſ.* 3.8. He will reward us as a *King*, yea, as a *God*. He will make over his Land and Jewels to us; he will give us the ſpring-flowers of joy here, and the harveſt of glory hereafter.

6. If we draw near to God, he will draw near to us*. If we draw near to him in duty, he will draw near to us in mercy. When the Prodigal approached to his Father, his Father drew near to him, and fell on his neck and kiſſed him, *Luke* 15.20. If we draw near to God with repenting hearts, he will draw near to us with a compaſſionate heart. *David* prayed, *Pſal.* 69. 18. *Draw nigh to my ſoul.* It is good to have God draw nigh to us. How ſweet is his preſence! he is light to the eye, joy to the heart. How happy was it for *Zacheus*, when Chriſt drew near to him! *This day is ſalvation come to thy houſe, Luke* 19.9. When God draws near to the ſoul, heaven and ſalvation draw near.

* Jam. 4.8.

2. There

2. There is a time coming, when we ſhall wiſh we had drawn near to God. We are ſhortly drawing near to our grave, *Pſalm* 107. 18. *They draw near unto the gates of death.* The wicked who care not for God, yet at death they would draw near to him. Then they cry as *Matth.* 8. 25. *Lord ſave us, or we periſh*; Then *mercy, mercy.* They run to God in diſtreſs, as in a ſtorm men run to a tree for ſhelter. But God will not ſhelter his enemies. The Lord gives the ſinner abundance of mercy in his life time, (as you have ſeen a loving Father bribing a Prodigal Son with money to ſee if he can reclaim him) but if the ſinner be not wrought upon with mercy, then at death the Sun of mercy ſets, and a dark night of wrath overtakes the ſinner. They who would not draw nigh to God as a friend, God will draw nigh to them as an enemy. 2. Motive.

How ſhall we do to draw near to God? Queſt.

Let us contemplate the excellencies of God. He is the *God of Glory*, *Anſ.* 1.

Pſalm 29. 3. full of orient beauty: in compariſon of whom both Angels and men are but as the *ſmall duſt of the balance* *. He is the *God of Love*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. who triumphs in acts of mercy. Well may this encourage our approaches to him who delights to diſplay the banner of free-grace to ſinners. If we ſhould hear of a perſon of Honour, who were of a lovely diſpoſition, obliging all that came to him by acts of kindneſs and civility, it would make us ambitiouſly deſirous to ingratiate our ſelves with him, and get into his acquaintance. God is the moſt ſoveraign good, the wonder of love, ready to diffuſe the ſilver ſtreams of his bounty to indigent creatures *; this if any thing will make us willing to draw near to him, and acquieſce in him as the center of felicity.

* Τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀπέραντον. Merc. Trigmeg.

* Pſal. 86. 5.

2. If we would draw near to God, let us ſtudy our own wants. Let us conſider in what need we ſtand of God, and that we cannot be happy without him. The Prodigal never drew near to his Father, till he *began to be in want*, *Luke* 15. A proud ſinner who was never

never convinced of his want, minds not to come near God; he hath a ſtock of his own to live upon, *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee.* A full ſtomach deſpiſeth the hony-comb. 'Tis the ſenſe of want brings us near to God. Why did ſo many lame and paralitical reſort to Chriſt, but becauſe they wanted a cure. Why doth the thirſty man draw near a fountain, but becauſe he wants water. Why doth a condemned man draw near his Prince, but becauſe he wants a pardon. When a poor ſoul reviews its wants, I want grace, I want the favour of God, I am damned without Chriſt; this makes him draw near to God, and be an earneſt ſupplicant for mercy.

If we would draw near to God, let it be our care to clear our intereſt in God, *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw near in full aſſurance of Faith.* When we know him to be our God, then we draw near to him. The Spouſe by virtue of the conjugal union, draws near to her Huſband, *Pſalm* 48. 14. *This God is our God.* 3.

Let us beg the holy Spirit. The Spirit of God hath a magnetical virtue. 4.

Corruption

Corruption draws the heart from God, the Spirit draws it to him, *Cant.* 1. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* The Spirit by his Omnipotent grace, draws the heart to God *suaviter*, but *fortiter*, *sweetly*, but *powerfully*.

5. Let us get our hearts fired with love to God: which way the love goes, that way the heart is drawn. If God be the treasure delighted in, our hearts will be drawn to him. Servile fear makes the soul fly from God, sacred love makes it fly to him.

FINIS.